SERBIAN MEDIEVAL PAINTING

THE AGE OF KING MILUTIN



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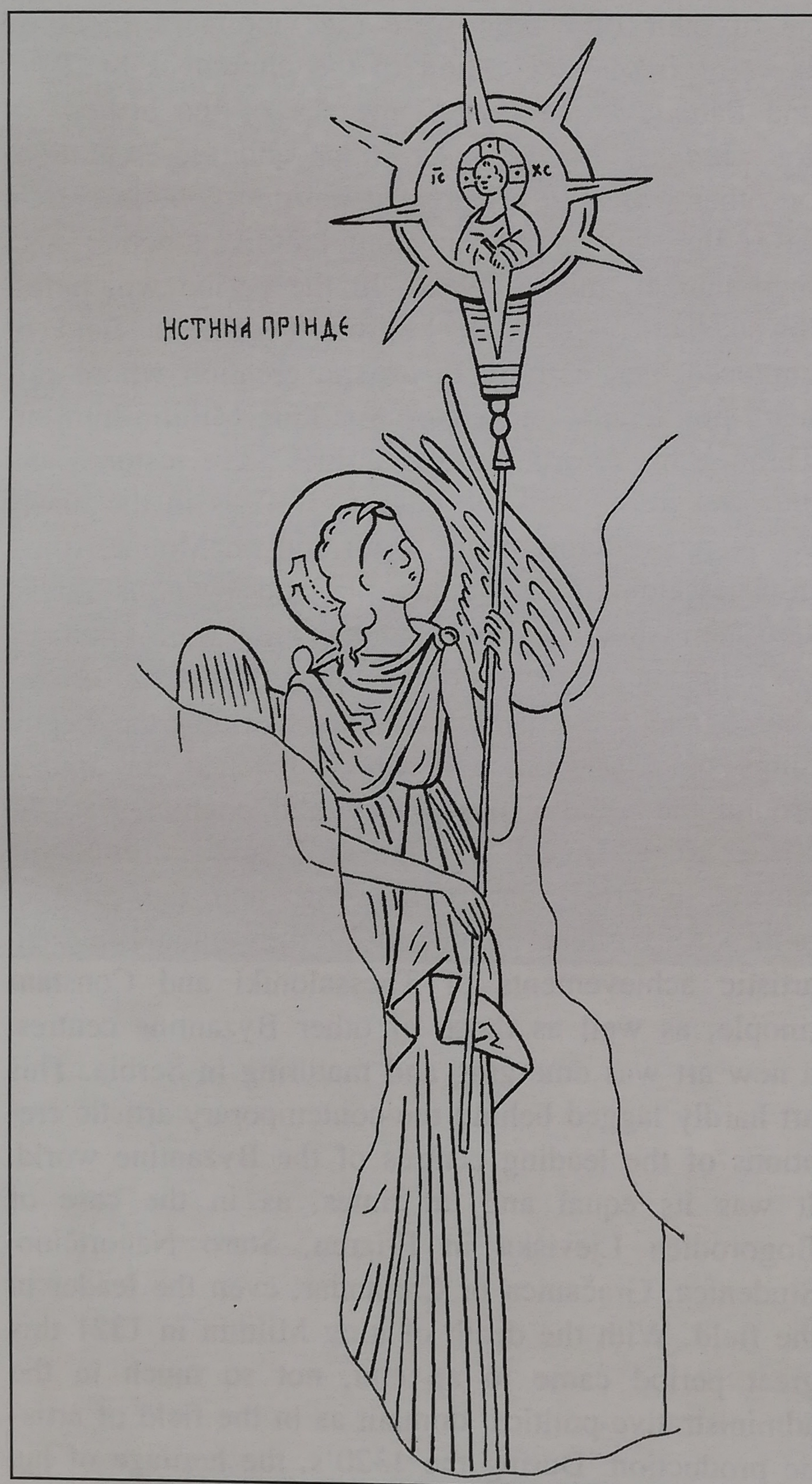
THE AGE OF KING MILUTIN

DRAGANIĆ
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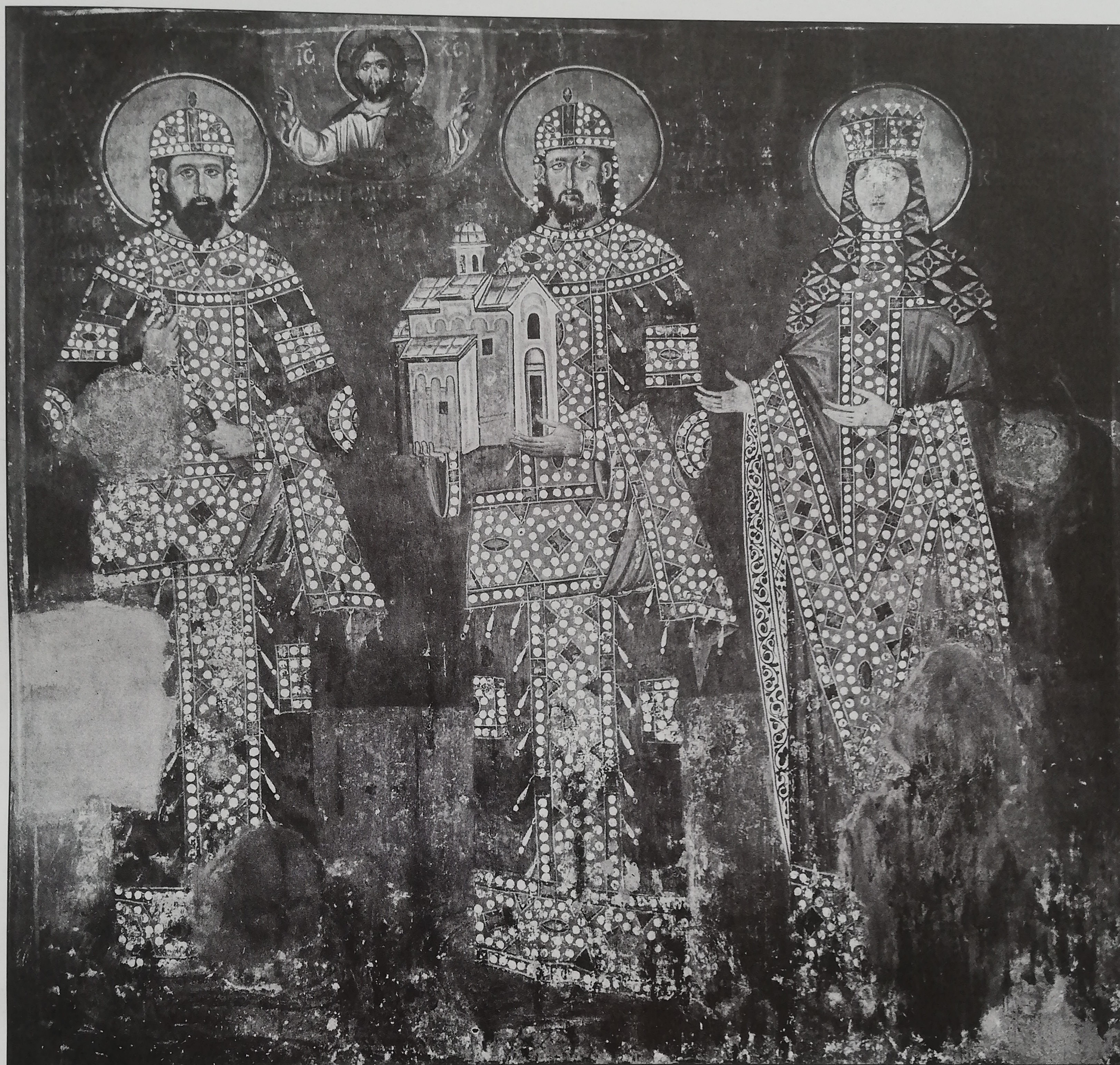
INTRODUCTION



The first two centuries of artistic creation in Serbia were marked by intricate and difficult paths of familiarisation with civilisations of both the West and the East and by efforts to select, adopt and adapt to the needs of the Serbian milieu all the highest values of the Orthodox world of the day. Beginning with the church of St. Michael in Ston (around 1050) and throughout the following years, the focus of artistic activity gradually shifted to the eastern reaches of Serbian lands, with the Romanesque style surviving most persistently in the domain of architecture and book illumination while the iconography of sacral spaces, as well as the wall paintings covering them, turned increasingly towards Byzantine forms and models. The fascination of the great jupanus Stefan Nemanja and his descendants on the royal throne of Serbia with the weakened Byzantine Empire and the adoption of their ideology, as well as the autonomy of the Serbian church within the Orthodox Christian ecumene, were elemental in tracing the destiny of the Serbian people, their culture and art. Imbued with the millennial tradition of Byzantine art, inspired by clever and farsighted men leading and directing the political, ecclesiastical and cultural life of the land in those days, Serbian painting resolutely joined the main currents of late Komnenian art. At the time when, after 1204, the Byzantines no longer ruled from the city on the Bosphorus and a series of smaller states were fighting for their own heritage and prestige in the Balkans, Serbian art became the haven of continuity and development of Eastern Christian art. During the XIII century, between the waning of late Komnenian art and Angeloi era and, following the restoration of Byzantine rule in Constantinople (1261),

the rise of that of the Palaiologoi, Serbian lands cradled the birth of a series of wall paintings displaying clearly all the characteristics of a developed iconography and style. The fact that these paintings were not just a local phenomenon in the westernmost reaches of the Orthodox world is further attested by similar, although rare, creations scattered from Bulgaria and Mount Athos across the Greek islands to Russia and Asia Minor and kept today in numerous libraries and museums throughout the world. On the other hand, owing to the economically strong and politically and spiritually stable Serbian state, the wall paintings in the endowments of Nemanja's sons and grandsons were not just a link between the two major periods of Byzantine painting, the Komnenian and the Palaiologan, stagnating and awaiting better days of restoration and cultural transformation of the old Byzantine capital. The preserved frescoes of Studenica (1208/1209), Žiča (1220–1221), Mileševa (1222––1228), Morača (1260), Sopoćani (1263–1268), Peć (around 1265), Gradac (around 1275) and a series of other works, represent a logical path of development, maturing and gradual dissolution of a new style and at the same time testify of the readiness and understanding with which the Serbian milieu accepted the highest forms of artistic creation, passing them on to the generation of painters of the restored Byzantine Empire. Other contemporary works, above all those of literature, also speak of an all-encompassing reception of this art as well as of the fact that it was this very form of artistic expression that the Serbs chose as the matrix into which they wove their own specific understanding of beauty and ideology and the one chosen to render the portraits of their rulers and ktetors as well as the cycles of their first saints.[1]

Significant changes in the development of Serbian painting occurred after 1275, contemporary to the forceful change on the throne which took place in 1276 and the one which followed shortly after, in 1282, when king Dragutin abdicated in favor of his brother Milutin. The long reign of king Milutin, which lasted until 1321, was filled with numerous tumults but also with cultural and artistic activity. In extent and character, especially after 1300, his reign undoubtedly represents a unique and complete phenomenon in ancient Serbian art. During the short period of his rule over the entire territory of the Serbian state, king Dragutin did not have enough time to dedicate more attention to the construction and decoration of churches – he restored the church of St. Achilleios at the see of the bishops of Moravica and saw to the painting of a new layer of frescoes in the narthex of the main monastery church at Djurdjevi Stupovi, Nemanja's endowment to the enlarging and embellishment of which Dragutin devoted great care.[2] He seems also to have made certain alterations in some of the existing churches. After 1282, king Dragutin saw to the completion of his previously commissioned works. The newly built chapel at Djurdjevi Stupovi, created by transforming the monastery entrance tower into a space of sacral function, was decorated with frescoes around 1283–1285 and the church in Arilje in 1295/1296. It remains unknown whether it was king Milutin alone, his brother Dragutin or both of them, during the harmonious period of their rule, who were the ktetors of the third layer of fresco decoration in the church of St. Peter and Paul (Petrova crkva), the see of the bishops of Ras. Judging by the inscriptions and representations on other works of art created before 1299, in certain cases they did appear as joint ktetors, together with their mother, queen Jelena. In the period which followed that fateful year, Serbia became a field of unprecedented activity in artistic creation whose primary protagonist and ktetor was king Milutin himself. Through his efforts famous shrines were restored and enlarged throughout the land as well as in the newly conquered regions in the south and on Mount Athos, in Thessaloniki, Constantinople and even as far as Jerusalem. Such activities of the king were emulated by representatives of the highest hierarchy of the church and the aristocracy, thus marking the beginnings of a phenomenon which reached its apogee around the middle of the XIV and continued in the XV century. During the age of king Milutin Serbia became a great construction site and the meeting point of excellent painters. Carefully monitoring all artistic achievements of Thessaloniki and Constantinople, as well as those of other Byzantine centres, a new art was emerging and maturing in Serbia. This art hardly lagged behind the contemporary artistic creations of the leading centres of the Byzantine world. It was its equal and, at times, as in the case of Bogorodica Ljeviška in Prizren, Staro Nagoričino, Studenica, Gračanica or Chilandar, even the leader in the field. With the death of king Milutin in 1321 this great period came to an end, not so much in the administrative-political domain as in the field of artistic production. During the 1320's, the heritage of his enterprises and the achievements of the artists of his



1
Arilje, *Ktetor's composition*, 1295/1296

age served as the basis for the development of a new phase in Serbian art, a phase which was to end around the middle of the second half of the XIV century with the death of the last Nemanjids and the catastrophe on the river Marica (1371).

Thus, the year 1299 divides the reign of king Milutin into two stages. The first (1282–1299) is marked by his seizure of power and conquest of vast territories as well as by an absence of large-scale

undertakings on the cultural scene. The change on the Serbian throne which took place in Deževo in 1282 seems to have been the result of circumstances in both internal and foreign affairs.[3] It was certainly no accident that the new king, probably fulfilling the obligations of an earlier contract with Charles d'Anjou, invaded Byzantine territories south of Mt. Šara, advancing far south during that same year and setting the Greek-Serbian border along the line stretching between Strumica, Prilep and Debar. For more than ten years after 1284 there was neither war nor peace between the neighbours while frequent skirmishes and looting along the border line became a common thing. Meanwhile, alone or together with his brother Dragutin, king Milutin focused all his potential as a warrior and statesman on the north frontier, at first in combats with Drman and Kudelin and later in armed conflicts with Šišman, the prince of Vidin, and the Tatar khan Nogay. While Milutin was busy concentrating all his powers on protecting or expanding the Serbian state, Dragutin was somewhat more devoted to the fresco decoration of Djurdjevi Stupovi, the completion of the church at Arilje and the founding of a royal workshop of craftsmen producing various objects of art. On the other hand, queen Jelena, to whom Milutin assigned the administration of certain regions of his state, was engaged in raising or restoring monasteries on the Adriatic coast and in its hinterland. Together with her two sons, she thus restored the church of St. Sergius and Bacchus on the Bojana in 1290 and donated luxuriously decorated icons to the famous shrines of St. Nicholas in Bari and St. Peter in Rome.[4] Nonetheless, all the ventures mentioned above were still only modest contributions to the brilliant art of the XIII century. Apart from the politically critical times for the Serbian state, this must also have been conditioned by a sudden and abrupt loosening of cultural ties between Byzantium and Serbia which took place as a result of frequent and long lasting conflicts.

Important and far-reaching changes in the field of artistic creation were to be felt soon after 1299. Following yet another attempt (in 1297) of the Byzantine emperor and his general Michael Glabas Tarchaniotes to regain control over the conquered territories and a long period of negotiations, a peace treaty was signed between the warring parties and crowned by a marriage between king Milutin and Simonida, the daughter of the emperor Andronikos II. That event had several consequences: from then on Serbian conquests of Byzantine lands were sanctioned and Milutin could now become their true ruler, family ties with the imperial court opened wide door the for the spread of Byzantine influences in Serbia and, as the emperor's son-in-law, Milutin decidedly resolved the question of succession to the Serbian throne in his own favour.[5] Namely, the Assembly of Deževo (1282) had presumably given Milutin the right to a life-long rule providing that, following his death, the royal line of succession be continued by Dragutin's sons. However, given Milutin's marriage to the daughter of the Byzantine emperor, the implementation of the decisions of the Deževo assembly was at best questionable: indeed, hostilities between the two brothers broke out soon after and lasted for more than a decade (until 1312). This war which engulfed the state brought about a significant division of power – the aristocracy, disapproving of the peace treaty with the Byzantines from the very beginning, sided mostly with Dragutin while the Church, aware of the benefits to be gained from approaching Constantinople, supported Milutin. The mutual sustenance between Milutin and the Church was to continue until the king's death and have a significant impact on culture and art. On the other hand, the king's reconciliation with Dragutin, under as yet unclear circumstances, seems to have caused new tumults in the land. Their settlement may have included an agreement which designated Milutin's children from his marriage to Simonida, and apparently also her brothers, as heirs to the Serbian throne. The person most stricken by these decisions was certainly the king's eldest son Stefan, until that moment considered to be his father's successor, who consequently tried to take the throne by force. Milutin thwarted his attempt and banished him, blinded, to Constantinople in 1314.[6]

Despite several moments of crisis, beginning with 1299 relations between Byzantium and Serbia were marked by manifold cordialities and cooperation. At first expressed only formally, Byzantine influences were seeping ever deeper and more systematically into the Serbian state, its culture and its art. The territories which once belonged to the Empire and which came under Serbian rule during Milutin's time played a specific role in this process, at first as an intermediary in the process of adoption of Byzantine offices, legal norms and terminology.[7]

During the first years of the XIV century, a large number of exceptionally important works of art were produced in Serbia and outside its boundaries which

were inspired, above all, by the king. A series of charters, biographies and chronicles speak of Milutin's famous enterprises from this period. Not only the number but apparently the very character of these monuments resulted from the growing strength of Serbian-Byzantine ties after 1299. Milutin's efforts to preserve the tradition of his state politics implied opening wide the traditional and inciting new areas of cultural and artistic creation. The Serbian king stimulated such activities primarily through his bountiful financial support and close cooperation with the Church. Copiously restoring and endowing episcopal sees above all, he opened wide the door for the spread of Orthodox spirituality so that the favourable impact of Byzantium was not limited only to the court but infused deeply all the currents of spiritual life in the land.[8]

At the crossroads of the Orthodox and the Catholic world, Serbia did not remain untouched by influences coming from both sides. Already in the days of Stefan Nemanja it made a final turn towards the Byzantine Empire but her ties with the West still remained strong – they persisted in economy, politics, at times even in art. Pursuing a tradition set by his ancestors, especially king Uroš I, Milutin intensified his predilection for Constantinople, in external pomp and ceremony he emulated the Byzantine court and adopted many of its customs and institutions. Contemporary sources are quite decided concerning his pro-Byzantine policy as well as his reserved relations with the Catholics. In general, the king's politics were truly focused on creating tight relations with Byzantium. It is, however, an undeniable fact that in his days the West was by no means disregarded, as attested by contacts with the papal curia and the political alliance forged in 1308 with Charles d'Anjou. Such relations with the Catholic West could have been additionally inspired by queen Jelena, Milutin's mother, who for many years ruled autonomously in the environs of Brnjaci in the region of Zeta, kept close ties with the pope and Dubrovnik and renovated and supported Catholic monasteries. Romanesque and Gothic art was thriving in the cities with a Catholic majority on the Adriatic coast and in its hinterland while their merchants, as well as a number of Saxons, settled permanently around markets and mining centres further inland.[9] Artefacts of western nature are found especially among objects of the applied arts – they were either imported from the West, reaching as far east as Chilandar, or produced in Serbia by craftsmen from abroad. Even the royal jewels were made by craftsmen who came from the Adriatic coast. For example, there is a preserved copy of a contract drawn in 1313 in Dubrovnik obliging a jeweller named Petar to spend a year on the Serbian court and comply with any order he may receive there from the king.[10] In monumental art there is an obvious ebb of Romanesque elements which had previously been in abundant use in architecture and sculpture. On the other hand, it is well known that the relatively poorly preserved Catholic monastery of St. Sergius and Bacchus, to which king Milutin was most devoted, seeing to its restoration in 1290 and 1318, was built in the Gothic style. Elements of Romanesque and Gothic decoration are seen also on Milutin's major endowment, the church of St. Stephen at Banjska. Archbishop Danilo explains their presence as a form of regard for the traditional expressed in the king's desire that Banjska be "modelled after the image of the Virgin of Studenica". Romanesque elements appear even in the sculptural decoration of the katholikon of Chilandar monastery.[11]

All this points to the fact that the Byzantinisation of Serbian culture in the age of king Milutin did not take place at once nor was it entirely thorough. Persisting ties with the West and a centuries long heritage of some art forms slowed down this process and gave it a somewhat specific nature. In the changes which swept over Serbian culture during the first decades of the XIV century the role of the court was undeniably principal for it was the court which stimulated most patently the adoption of Byzantine models, above all in the sphere of politics and, later on, in the field of artistic production. Being the major ktetor of great artistic undertakings, the king could undoubtedly extend his influence over that domain. The question still remains, however, regarding the extent to which the earliest forms of the new culture were organically adopted and the measure in which they were the result of conscious affectation and sheer imitation.[12] The role and significance of Thessaloniki was exceptionally important in the course of these events, not only because of the fact that at the beginning of the XIV century it had become the second political and cultural capital of the Byzantine Empire, that it was closer to Serbia than Constantinople and that the Serbian monastery of Chilandar was oriented towards it, but also because in 1303 Thessaloniki became the residence of empress Irene, Milutin's mother-in-law. It was in that city that she schemed to

secure the Serbian throne for her sons, there that she invited her daughter Simonida and son-in-law for a visit, from that city she sent them lavish presents. The above mentioned personages and signs of translating the glamour of the Byzantine court to Serbia were described by Nikephoros Gregoras in the following passage: ”Θέλουσα γάρ τὴν θυγατέρα βασιλικοῖς παρασήμοις κοσμῆσαι, ἵνα μηδ' ἐκείνη μηδενὸς ἐλαττοῖτο, ὁπόσα 'Ρωμαίων θεσμοὶ τὰς βασιλίδας ἤρηνται πάλαι κοσμεῖν, μὴ δυναμένη δ' ἄλλως τὸ καταθύμιον ἐκπερᾶναι, φέρουσα καλύπτραν ἐπέθηκε πρότερον τῇ κεφαλῇ τοῦ γαμβροῦ λίθοις καὶ μαργάροις πολυτελέσι κεκοσμημένην, ὁπόσοις καὶ οἵοις μικροῦ καὶ ἡ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς 'Ανδρονίκου τοῦ βασιλέως ἐκεκόσμητο. ἔπειτ' ἐκεῖθεν ἀρξαμένη κατ' ἔτος ἑτέραν προσετίθει κρείττω τῆς προτέρας ἀεί....τίς δ' ἂν ἐξετάζοι τῶν βασιλικῶν κειμηλίων τὸν ἀριθμὸν, ὁπόσα αὐτὴ τοὺς 'Ρωμαίους ἀποστεροῦσα τῷ Κράλῃ Σερβίας ἐδίδου...”.[13] Regardless of the obvious hyperbole of Gregoras's account, portraits of Milutin and Simonida demonstrate an intention to emulate imperial grandeur, perhaps the true aim of empress Irene, while king Milutin himself was responsible for the changes in royal iconography which were mostly based on the prototypes found in Byzantine art: instead of in the humble, pious stance of his ancestors, king Milutin is portrayed either as a triumpher or in the moment of his heavenly investiture, in the manner of contemporary and earlier autokrators of Byzantium.

The political and cultural inclination towards Byzantium, which began during the first years of the XIV century, was fully supported and further developed by the Church. Generally speaking, this was the century of powerful expansion of monasticism in the entire Orthodox world and king Milutin did not only use its strength but also gave it his wide sustenance by renovating a large number of monasteries, especially in the south regions of his state, and abundantly endowing them with large holdings of land.[14] On the other hand, during the conflict with his brother Dragutin and at the time when most of the nobility had turned their backs on him, he kept the throne largely as a result of the support he received from the Church. Their cooperation became especially tight after the reconciliation with Byzantium because of the advantages the Church stood to gain from friendly relations with Constantinople, the see of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

In the cultural life of those days, Chilandar, the Serbian monastery on Mount Athos, gained special importance. Lately, its role and significance in the field of literature has been the subject of scholarly interest and these investigations show that this monastery was the true source of crucial impulses which strengthened the church and brought about liturgical reforms.[15] The need to change the old and write new texts, which arose from the requirements of liturgical reform, resulted in lively literary production in both Chilandar and Serbia. The first decades of the XIV century witnessed the translation of the Jerusalem Typikon (1319), the critical reviewing of earlier translations of the Gospels and Deeds (Chilandar Gospel No.1 from 1316, Deeds of the Apostles from Šišatovac from 1324) as well as the translation from Greek of the prologue in verse and the edition of Raška krmčija (Nomokanon of Raška). Liturgical reasons conditioned not only the copying of existing hagiographies of Serbian saints (Par. cod. slav. 10) but also the writing of new ones. The activity of Teodosije falls exactly in the last years of the XIII and the first decades of the XIV century. Based on the model offered by Domentijan, he wrote new biographies of St. Sava and Symeon Nemanja and created new services for them as well as for St. Peter of Koriša, thus completing the cult of this saint with texts of those literary genres.[16] The very same reasons instigated archbishop Danilo II to spend a lengthy period of time on the ”Serbian prologue”, actually a hagiographic compendium containing the biographies of Serbian rulers and archbishops. The beginning of his work coincides with the age of king Milutin (Danilo's biography of queen Jelena most probably dates from 1317) and his entire opus reflects the spiritual tendencies of the first years of the XIV century (monastic reform, strong influence of liturgy, adoption of the leading principles of Byzantine literature).[17] The appearance of these famous Serbian men of letters on Mount Athos is by no means accidental or isolated. Located on Byzantine territory, Chilandar kept close ties with both Constantinople and Thessaloniki. Byzantine emperors Andronikos II and Constantine IX issued many charters granting estates and benefits to this monastery and confirming the abundant donations of the Serbian king. On his part, Milutin strove in every way to raise the esteem of Chilandar: by renovating the katholikon and the funerary chapel as well as the refectory, raising towers within the system of the monastery's fortifica-



2

Staro Nagoričino, *Ktetor's composition*, 1315–1317

tions, commissioning many icons and other works of art, restoring its metochia and endowing them with large holdings of land. Owinpg to its efficient and capable hegoumenoi, Danilo, Nikodim and Gervasije above all, the brethren made use of the king's generosity in the best possible way. More than anything, Chilandar's educated monks turned this monastery into a true centre of Serbian spiritual and cultural life. Thus, already in the short span between 1316 and 1320, several writers and scribes were working in Chilandar and in the cell at Karyes: apart from Teo-

dosije, there were also Teodul and then Gervasije, Damjan, Roman, Nikola, Metodije, Grigorije.[18] Moreover, archbishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church were usually recruited among former hegoumenoi of this monastery just as it happened that episcopal thrones were often occupied by Chilandar monks. Hence, probably in 1307, Sava of Chilandar was invested as the bishop of Prizren, to be elected archbishop soon after (1309). Danilo II praises his intellect and acumen and it is well known that he was involved in the restoration of Bogorodica Ljeviška, Žiča and Banjska.[19] In those days, the role of Danilo, a former Chilandar monk and the future archbishop of Serbia, a brave man, diplomat, writer and an educated theologian, was of exceptional importance. Being extraordinarily devoted to king Milutin, during his mandate as hegoumenos of Banjska he directed the works on the king's mausoleum leaving this position only to become the bishop of Hum. However, not even the duties he had prior to his investiture as the archbishop of Serbia could keep him away from Mount Athos for longer periods of time. Apart from being the ktetor of several endowments in Peć, Danilo was also the main consultant of Serbian kings in questions of art – in Banjska and later in Dečani he managed to balance successfully the kings' desire to respect both tradition and the requirements of contemporary Orthodox sanctuaries. Although seemingly traditional, Danilo's complete life work was very influential in introducing the Serbian lands, which still held on to their ancient idiosyncrasies, to the main currents of the Orthodox world.[20] On the other hand, not much is known about Grigorije II, a bishop of Ras who was probably educated in Chilandar, another important person active in Serbia at the beginning of the XIV century. Assumptions concerning the life and works of this bishop are based only on the brief, incidental data which we have today. He took great care of his church, St. Peter in Ras, and made a copy and a new recension of the collection of canon laws drawn by Sava. In 1305, in his prologue to this manuscript, he clearly indicated the requirements facing church dignitaries of those times: "For every teacher, whether a bishop or a priest, and any man who shares the mission of teaching, if he knows not well these books than he knows himself not; and having perceived the depth of these God inspired books, he shall perceive, as if in a mirror, who he is and what he should be like and shall convey this to the others and teach them."[21] There certainly must have been other learned bishops who came from Chilandar to dioceses in Serbia. Athonite origins can only be surmised in the case of Arsenije and Damjan, bishops of Prizren, and Nikola, bishop of Dabar while there is no data at all for many others. Names of some of the bishops and hegoumenoi are mentioned either in connection to the building of chuches or in charters issued by king Milutin (bishop Ignjatije of Gračanica, hegoumenoi Andonije and Venjamin of Nagoričino and Jovan of Studenica). They, too, were learned theologians and men well educated on a broad cultural basis – as attested by the beauty of the architecture and frescoes of their churches, their form and contents.[22]

Another exceptionally important person of the day was Nikodim, former hegoumenos of Chilandar and hermit in the Karyes cell. He was elected to the office of archbishop at an assembly held in 1317 in Peć. Highly educated and with a good knowledge of Greek, a talented man of letters and theologically inspired, he was – along with St. Sava and Danilo II – the greatest patron of the arts among the Serbian archbishops: the service dedicated to him mentions three churches (St. Demetrios at Peć is the only one preserved today) and his merits in the restoration of Žiča. His greatest deeds also include a liturgical reformation initiated through the translation into Serbian of the Jerusalem Typikon, or Typikon of St. Sabas. His work on this translation began already on Mount Athos and was finished in Serbia in 1319, as the final step in the process taking place simultaneously on Mount Athos and in Serbia.[23] Services based on the Jerusalem model were common on Mount Athos long before the time of Nikodim and the introduction of the Typikon to the Serbian milieu was preceded by changes in the most important liturgical books, the litourgiarion, euchologion, menologion, triodion and ochtoechos.[24] In his prologue to the translation of the Typikon Nikodim pointed out that he only fulfilled the testament of St. Sava the Serbian who was truly the first to adapt the liturgy of the Serbian church to the Jerusalem rite. The event which directly initiated the actual translation of the Typikon was Nikodim's stay in Constantinople where he became acquainted with its practical application.[25] The fact that its rules are more strict than those of the Constantinopolitan Euergetis Typikon and that it was in wide use on Mount Athos and partly in Serbia, too, made it seem appropriate in the eyes of the Chilandarites who headed the Serbian church during the first decades of the XIV century. However, due to the rather late date of



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Chilandar monastery, beginning of the XIV century

its translation and introduction to the liturgical practice of the Serbian church, the influences of the Typikon on architecture and painting of Milutin's era are not that obvious.

In order to enhance our understanding of the changes which took place in Serbian culture and art we must also consider the significant role of those Byzantine territories which were conquered by the Serbian state between 1282 and 1297. In the process of adopting Byzantine customs and art they must have

of adopting Byzantine customs and art they must have acted as cultural intermediaries. Not only were they the main channels of transmission of influences coming from Constantinople, Thessaloniki and Mount Athos, they also made considerable contributions to the nurturing of a different culture through their own, centuries long heritage. Their cities and monasteries, now under Serbian rule, were still dotted with representative monuments of architecture and painting. It is surely not without significance that – in his attempts to thwart Serbian conquests in the south – emperor Andronikos II devoted special care to the archbishopric of Ohrid, endowing its cathedral church of St. Sophia, as well as the newly built church of the Virgin Peribleptos, with donations to such an extent that, at one point, Ohrid became the most prominent artistic centre in the interior of the Balkan Peninsula.[26] It was in Ohrid that the painters whose work marked the age of king Milutin began their careers; this city seems to have been the corridor of Epirote influences manifested in the architecture of some Serbian churches. The importance of other monastic centres is not to be disregarded either. Although some of the Greek bishoprics passed under the jurisdiction of the Serbian church, the Greek element still remained strong within them. Hence, a curious blend of Byzantine and Serbian elements appears in the new churches: Greek and Serbian (at times in its archaic orthography) are used side by side in manuscripts, inscriptions and on frescoes; the cults of both Serbian, local and Ohrid saints are exalted in painting while certain elements of the Raška school make sporadic incursions in the field of architecture and painting.[27]

Therefore, after the year 1300, there were many and mutually intertwined favourable conditions for a true flourishing of Serbian art. Unquestionably, the main protagonist, in close cooperation with the highest ecclesiastical circles, was king Milutin who thus emulated and even surpassed his ancestors by restoring, enlarging and endowing their foundations, episcopal sees and famous Byzantine shrines. It is also quite conspicuous that a large portion of his activities as a patron of the arts was focused on the newly acquired territories while covering also the broader reaches of the Orthodox world: Mount Athos, Thessaloniki, Constantinople, Jerusalem. To date, only a portion of the great number of his endowments has been preserved, some of them reaching our time in ruins while the geographic location of others still remains to be determined. At the outset of his ventures as a ktetor stands the church dedicated to his patron saint, St. Georgios Gorgos near Skoplje, previously already richly endowed with donations from Byzantine, Bulgarian and Serbian rulers. However, nothing remains of the first in line of Milutin's great artistic undertakings, even the location of the monastery is only barely known.[28]

All the finest and in every aspect superlative in Milutin's activities as a ktetor is tied to Chilandar, a fact especially stressed by the king's biographer: "For this Christ loving (king), having razed to the ground the original divine church of this holy place founded by the Lord and called Chilandar, built a larger one in its place and decorated it with all sorts of beautiful fittings, unrelentlessly giving much gold, and raised in that place imperial palaces and excellent cells... an enclosure with great fortifications... and large pyrgoi... And not only in that place, the house of the Blessed Virgin called Chilandar, but also in all other monasteries of the Holy Mountain." The architect of the grand triconch church may have been Georgios Marmaras from Thessaloniki, aided by his assistants, including Michael and Barnabas who worked on the floor and apparently some stonecutters from Serbia who were in charge of the sculptural decoration. While the precise date of its construction remains undetermined, we are certain that its frescoes were finished during the last years of Milutin's life. Apart from the beautiful katholikon, the king also saw to the furnishing of Chilandar with other structures, at least a refectory and a funerary chapel, decorated with frescoes in his days. Responding to the appeal of kyr Theodulos, he also renovated the hermitage of St. Sava in Karyes. Moreover, the king commissioned icons for the monastery, some of which are still kept in Chilandar today.[29]

Another significant area of Milutin's activities as a ktetor was tied to episcopal sees, in a way continuing the tradition set by his elder brother, his father and more distant ancestors. It has already been pointed out that Dragutin raised a new church at the see of the bishops of Moravica. One of the brothers also renovated the cathedral of Ras, the oldest Serbian bishopric. In those days, Žiča and Peć, the two sees of Serbian archbishops, were either in the hands of barbarian invaders, in considerably poor conditions or even ruined. Žiča was burned around 1290, if not even earlier, and remained deserted for a long time before archbishop Jevstatije II (1292–1309) devoted himself to its reconstruction. His successor, Sava III



4

Banjska monastery, 1312–1316

(1309–1316), carried on with the works which were finally completed by Danilo II. The painters, engaged at the beginning of the XIV century to decorate its main church, showed great respect for the older frescoes on its walls, they conserved all those in good condition and did not make any considerable changes in the existing programme. Works on the fresco decoration of the church lasted just as long as those on its architectural reconstruction: they probably began already in the days of Jevstatije and were completed only in the times of Sava III.[30] The role of king

Milutin in these renovations is as yet uncertain although it should not, by any means, be ruled out. Judging by the inclusion of his portrait in the representation of the Christmas hymn in the church, it must have been considerable. Although there are no written testimonies and no indications on the wall paintings of the west bay of the church of the Holy Apostles, we can nevertheless assume, with great certainty, that he also took part in the renovation of Peć. The fact that these frescoes were painted shortly after 1300 and that they display the portraits of his ancestors are strong reasons to believe that king Milutin must have had a certain part in the restoration of wall paintings of this archbishopric see.[31]

The large-scale restoration of the equally old cathedral of Prizren, which took place during the episcopate of Damjan (until 1307), Sava (until 1309) and probably other bishops in rapid succession on the throne of Prizren at the beginning of the XIV century, is also the work of king Milutin. At that time the church of Bogorodica Ljeviška received its five-domed form including two nartheces, a belfry and several parekklesia. After the work of the master builder Nicholas was completed, a group of painters headed by Michael Astrapas entered the church. Like the architect which preceded them, in the years between 1309 and 1313 they produced one of the most beautiful works of Serbian medieval art. From the somewhat later charter issued in 1324 by Milutin's son, Stefan Uroš III, we learn that the king had richly endowed the church and provided it with books and a treasury.[32]

The major endowment of king Milutin and his final resting place, the church of St. Stephen at Banjska, was also raised in an episcopal see. The renovation of the church began after an agreement had been reached between the king, his mother Jelena, brother Dragutin and the acting archbishop Sava III, shortly after the ceasefire between the two brothers and the investiture of Danilo as the bishop of Banjska which took place probably during 1312. Construction works took a long time. In the meantime Jelena and Sava III passed away so that the charter was confirmed by Dragutin (died in 1316) and archbishop Nikodim, following his election as the archbishop of the Serbian church on Ascension day in 1317. Obeying the king's explicit order, this church was raised "as an image of the Virgin of Studenica", as a sign of regard for Serbian heritage but not as a simple copy of the older building from Studenica. The church at Banjska must have received its frescoes after 1316 because the charter issued by king Milutin does not mention its decoration. Because the monastery was later badly ruined and its church converted into a mosque, only modest fragments remain of the once brilliant wall paintings, famous for their gold. The original glory and greatness of Banjska can now be surmised only from the results of recent extensive archeological exploration. We do, however, know that the monastery was lavishly endowed by the king with exceptionally large and bountiful land holdings. It was also the king's order that it should no longer serve as an episcopal see but assume the sole function of a royal mausoleum. In this respect he followed yet another tradition set by his ancestors for no Serbian king, nor any of the later rulers of Serbian lands was ever laid to rest in a cathedral church.[33]

In return, Danilo, the bishop of Banjska, was given jurisdiction over another bishopric, that of Hum. The new bishop found the diocese and its cathedral, the church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the river Lim, as well as its other churches in a desolate condition and turned for help to the king. Despite the fact that the partly preserved pertaining document offers no direct evidence of the king's role in the restoration, Milutin did answer the plea of his good friend. The architecture, and most of all the new frescoes of this church, indicate his presence in this enterprise. The entire restoration took place between 1317 (the year of Danilo's investiture as bishop of Hum) and 1321 (the year of the king's death). The time of completion of the frescoes is most probably closer to the latter date. In any case, they could not have been painted after 1321 because, shortly after the king's death, Danilo, still the bishop of Hum, set off for Mount Athos where he remained until the date of his election as the archbishop of Serbia (1324).[34]

King Milutin also restored the cathedral church of the bishops of Lipljan – Gračanica, a church which has reached our days almost unaltered. Here too, at the site of an older Byzantine basilica, he encountered a badly ruined modest church from the days of one of his ancestors from the XIII century. In its place he raised a new building of exceptionally harmonious proportions and shapes and dedicated it to the Virgin. The knowledge and experience of the builders from Prizren and Nagoričino produced here a grandiose building of a five-domed cross-in-square plan with an ambulatory ending in parekklesia, a narrow narthex and a gallery chamber above it. It was decorated with



5
Studenica, *Kraljeva crkva*, 1313/1314

frescoes most probably between 1319 and 1321. Ignjatije, the bishop of Lipljan, played a great role both in the construction of the church and the formulation of its fresco programme. His name appears several times in the text of the king's charter preserved in fresco on one of the walls of this church.[35]

Several years earlier, in 1313 to be more precise, king Milutin also restored the church of St. Georgios Tropaiophoros in Staro Nagoričino near Kumanovo. Its construction and decoration were apparently tied to Milutin's military success against the Turks in Asia Minor. This victory of the Serbian troops, apparently held in high reverence, is mentioned in the ktetor's inscription carved on the lintel of the west portal and reflected in the ktetor's composition on the north wall. Judging by the look of the model seen on this fresco, on the south, and probably the north side as well, the church was encircled by an open porch with arcades. The extent of the XIV century restoration is clearly visible even today. The master builder employed by Milutin raised only the upper portions of the walls and the vaulting, creating a five-domed church of the cross-in-square plan in a new choice of materials (stone, brick and earthenware) and with an additional narthex and parekklesia. Several years later, this solution was to reappear in its perfected form in Gračanica. Work on the fresco decoration of the church at Nagoričino began in 1315 or 1316 and was completed in 1317/1318.[36]

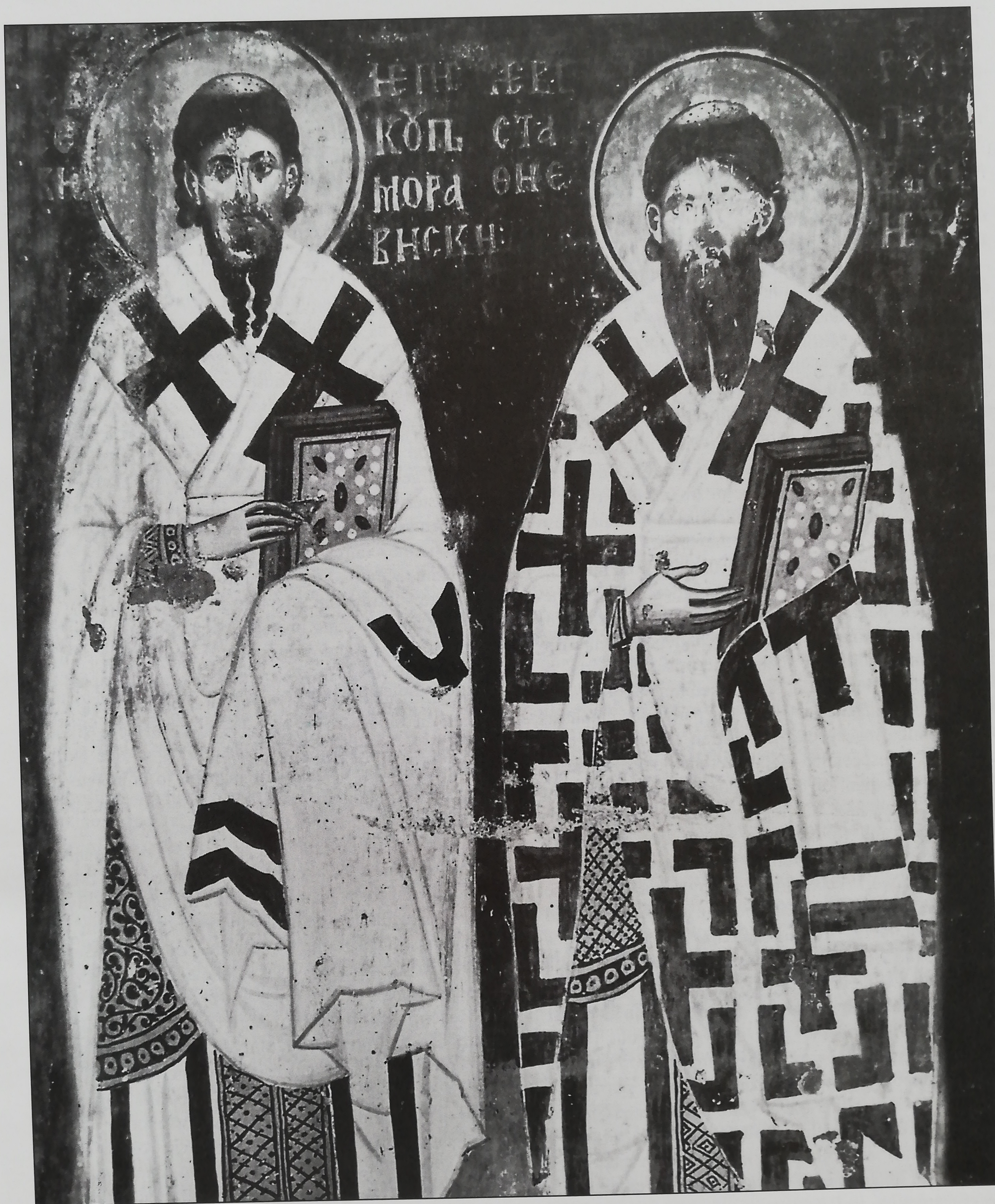
In rendering Milutin's endeavours as a ktetor, archbishop Danilo makes special note of the king's care for the endowments of his ancestors: "And in his fatherland he raised many holy monasteries from the ground and, having been renewed by the Holy Spirit, invested himself with the glory of restoring the ancient endowments of his fathers and forefathers and did even more of what is pleasing to the Lord than the root from which he stemmed." In a similar manner, this is also pointed out by the king himself (or by Danilo, should authorship be ascribed to him) in the prologue of the charter of St. Stephen of Banjska.[37] In addition to a series of other mentioned enterprises, the product of this dedication of the king's is the church of St. Joachim and Anne (the so-called Kraljeva crkva) raised in the monastery of Studenica in 1314. The inscription in stone on its east facade and the ktetor's composition attest to this fact. Minute in dimension but pronouncedly harmonious in form and decorated with outstanding frescoes (painted probably in 1318–1319), this church is one of the most beautiful gifts donated to the famous endowment of the founder of the Serbian Nemanjid dynasty.[38]

The construction of St. Nikita near Skoplje can be associated with Milutin's renovation of a large number of other churches in this city and its environs in the years following 1299. However, his intention to provide Chilandar with another metochion in the fatherland seems to have provided the most decisive impulse. The church was restored "from the foundations" in the form of a single-dome cross-in-square structure. Its interior was decorated with frescoes (partly restored in 1484). There are no written sources indicating the date of their creation. It is only the characteristics they display which draw them close to the period around 1320 while the absence of Milutin's portrait indicates either that he was not the actual ktetor or that they were painted shortly after his death.[39]

In exalting the king's virtues – his love of God, modesty, temperance and mercy – archbishop Danilo II also adds: "And not only in the God given state of his fatherland, but all through the great Romania and in the great and New Rome, Constantinople, itself, he built churches and to the rest he gave alms, there feeding and warming the feeble... Thus he lived and did for many years, so that his name became known and celebrated in all the neighbouring lands, east and west: Stefan Uroš, the supreme and mighty and sovereign and merciful Serbian king."[40]

Out of the great number of his endowments only two churches with fresco decorations, icons and other gifts have been preserved, one in Chilandar and the other in Thessaloniki – Hagios Nikolaos ton Orphanon or Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos. Although it has the exterior appearance of a three-nave basilica, this Thessaloniki church is actually a single-nave structure with two longitudinal parekklesia and a common narthex on the west side. Its frescoes are well preserved but not in their entirety so that we do not know whether they once included representations which spoke directly of Milutin as their ktetor. However, there are several details on the existing frescoes, rare in the Byzantine world and common in Serbian art, which clear away the long present hesitancy concerning the identity of the church and its ktetor. Moreover, their stylistic traits testify that these wall paintings were created during the second decade of the XIV century, i.e. at the peak of king Milutin's activities as a patron of the arts.[41]

Little or practically nothing is known today of the king's other numerous endowments and their paint-



6
Arilje, *Bishop Jevsevije and archbishop Jevstatije*, 1295/1296

ings: St. Georgios Gorgos, St. Constantine, St. John the Prodromos and the Virgin Tricheiroussa in Skoplje, St. George in Orahovica, St. Stephen in Prizren, St. George in the region Kičevo, St. Nicholas at the foot of Mt. Kožlje on the Pčinja, his churches in Jerusalem, Constantinople, St. George in Thessaloniki and the king's palace in this city.[42] Although subsequent tradition also ascribes many other churches to this great patron of the arts, it is hardly possible to associate them all with king Milutin.[43]

In his great and numerous endeavours as a ktetor the king relied mostly on the assistance of the archbishops, bishops and hegoumenoi of the most prominent monasteries. Moreover it is highly probable that the restoration of a number of churches was frequently initiated by those representatives of ecclesiastical circles. That was certainly the case with the church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim when bishop Danilo of Hum, in his desire to renovate his cathedral, turned to the king for help. In certain instances, when the restoration or construction of a church lasted for several years, each in the line of prelates on the episcopal throne of a given diocese continued the work on the construction and decoration of the cathedral church began by his predecessor. Their merits were recorded either in the king's charters or in inscriptions commemorating their enterprises. Efforts of church dignitaries could also be commemorated in a more modest manner, by placing particular emphasis on and procuring special decoration for an icon of a saint held in especially high reverence or regarded as the holy guardian of the prelate in question, most often his name-sake. Owing to the writings of Danilo's disciple and follower, we know that archbishop Jevstatije dedicated himself to the restoration of Žiča and that his work was carried on by Sava III (whose portrait still stands in that church), to be completed only by Danilo II.[44] In his charter issued to Bogorodica Ljeviška, the king mentions the efforts of bishops Damjan and Ilija in the godly endeavour of raising their cathedral church. In the inscription on the east facade the first of the two also points out: "I ja smerni (e)p(isko)p' prizren'ski Damjan trudih se" (I, too, the humble bishop of Prizren, Damjan, put in my efforts), while bishop Sava who participated in the completion of the church had inscriptions with his name placed in several spots on the church exterior.[45] The role of hegoumenoi Andonije and Venjamin in the construction and decoration of the church of St. George at Staro Nagoričino must certainly have been considerably greater what their modest inscriptions actually disclose.[46] Jovan, the hegoumenos of Studenica, was far less humble. In his inscription on the facade of Kraljeva crkva at Studenica, following immediately that of the king, he put down the following: "S'zda že se si hram' s' potruždenijem' arhimandrita i protosingelu Jovana" (This church was raised through the efforts of the archimandritos and protosingelos hegoumenos Jovan).[47] The merits of Ignjatije, the bishop of Lipljan, in the rebuilding of Gračanica were recorded both in the king's charter and, rather discretely, in the fresco decoration.[48] Meanwhile, in the biography of king Milutin, bishop Danilo gives a lively and detailed account of his own undertakings in the construction of Banjska.[49] It is obvious that not only were these well educated church dignitaries entrusted with preparations for the construction and decoration of royal endowments and put in charge of regulating legal and financial matters on monastery land holdings, but their influence spread to the actual shaping of the architecture and wall paintings of the churches assigned to their care.

King Milutin was certainly the greatest ktetor of his age; during the first phase of his reign he was accompanied by his brother, king Dragutin, and their mother, queen and subseguently nun Jelena. After a number of years, however, this role was adopted also by the aristocracy and church prelates of noble birth. Thus, in the years around 1320 archbishop Nikodim raised the churches of St. Demetrios in Peć and St. Sava in Lizica, but did not manage to complete their fresco decoration in his lifetime. Before him, similar feats were undertaken by his predecessors – in Žiča and perhaps other churches as well. Having conquered large territories of the Byzantine state, king Milutin encountered there many endowments raised by Byzantine aristocrats, especially in Skoplje and its surroundings. The example they set induced the Serbian nobles to raise their own foundations. Out of this group of monuments only the church of the Virgin Hodegetria in Mušutište near Prizren remains. It was built in the form of a single-dome cross-in-square structure in 1314/15 and decorated shortly after by the treasurer (great kaznac) Jovan Dragoslav and members of his family.[50] On the estate of another, in this case unidentified nobleman, in Sušica, rose a single-nave church dedicated to the Virgin, decorated with frescoes in the years around 1310 and displaying Slavic inscriptions of archaic orthography.[51] The ktetor of the burial church of St. Prochor of Pčinja near

Vranje also remains unknown. Only in our days we witness the re-emerging of its original frescoes beneath a later layer dating from 1488/9. The name of the artist who created them and their style, as well as the preserved architectural elements and the inscription bearing the name of bishop or archbishop Sava, testify that the church and its frescoes date from the days of king Milutin.[52] At that time, this church was probably restored through the efforts of Sava, bishop of Prizren, and decorated with frescoes around 1315. We have already mentioned that the presence of a Catholic population in Milutin's state must not, by any means, be disregarded. This is especially true of the coastal region and the environs of significant market places and mining centres where thriving local Catholic communities certainly had their own churches. Little has remained of these buildings: the church at Stari Trg seems to have received a new layer of frescoes at this time but they have been so badly ruined that even the scenes in the apse are not clearly discernible. In Kotor, the Collegiate church of St. Mary was reconstructed around 1300. Its partly preserved frescoes of a somewhat later date have been discovered only recently but so far there is no preserved data concerning the identity of their ktetors.[53]

Such a multitude of churches and pertaining frescoes and icons all dating from the admittedly extremely long reign of one king, even if we take into account only those which have survived to this day, is almost unequalled in the later Middle Ages. The exceptional nature of Serbian art, and in particular that from the beginning of the XIV century, is marked by a remarkably high quality and a striving to break through the temporal limitations of state boundaries and join the major currents of the highest artistic achievements of the Byzantine world. These exceptional qualities of Serbian art from the age of king Milutin, and in particular the paintings of this epoch which stand out in both quantity, iconography and style, have long been known to scholars. Depending on the information available, the different viewpoints of the leading centres of art history, the new discoveries and the publication of works presenting monuments which are less well known, or not at all familiar, to scientific circles, Serbian painting of the age of king Milutin has so far been classified either as neo-Hellenistic in style or as a representative of either the Macedonian, Serbian or Chilandar school. It has also, rather hazily, been assigned to the Palaiologan style or rather, somewhat more precisely, to its "first" or "second" phase as well as to the beginnings of the Palaiologan renaissance, the classicist period of this art and so forth.[54] In a way, all of the various approaches were sublimated in the work of Svetozar Radojčić who was convinced that the monuments from Milutin's time constitute a specific entity: during his reign both architecture and painting had a style of their own which, despite the strong ties with Constantinople, crystallised into a unique school. Based primarily on their stylistic qualities, he placed the art of this epoch within the framework of the "narrative style" which did not end with the king's death.[55] On his part, Horst Hallensleben named it the "school of painting of king Milutin" thus not only overemphasising the influence of the Serbian king on the art of this period but also classifying under this term works of art which were in no way connected with king Milutin and neglecting the impact of other highly significant factors in the flowering of this art in the Serbian state. The author was aware of the fact that the preserved works represent the creations of several painters but, according to him, they all operated under the patronage of the Serbian king. Furthermore, this implies that they all belonged to the same workshop, a premise which accounts for the uniformity of their spiritual-artistic expression and allows the author to classify the entire corpus of paintings in king Milutin's state and abroad under one general school.[56] Hallensleben's theory was in many ways shaken by Vojislav J. Djurić, the most persuasive reason being this scholar's observation that, apart from the incontestable impact of the royal court, the changes in Serbian painting can not be truly comprehended without understanding the contribution in this matter of the church and its most prominent representatives. In another instance, Djurić decidedly stated and explained his views in greater detail, substantiating his conclusions with analyses of the monuments in question. In his opinion, the southward expansion of the state, the king's kinship with the imperial family, the forging of political, cultural and artistic ties with Byzantium and the arrival of the most progressive painters of the day to Serbia were events of crucial importance for the emergence and development of a new art in this land. As a result of the above mentioned conditions, the concept of religious images was entirely changed in Serbia, in many ways as a result of the work of two painters, Michael

and Eutychios. Thus, at the beginning of the XIV century, the paintings produced in Serbia almost equalled the famous creations of Constantinople, Thessaloniki, Mount Athos, Veria and Mistra, not only because they appeared at nearly the same time but also because they rivalled them in quality.[57] Finally, in one of his last studies devoted to the major works of painting from the first decades of the XIV century in Constantinople, Thessaloniki and Serbia, Djurić confirmed his earlier views and showed how the art of the Serbian milieu shared the fate of that of Byzantine metropoles, going through the same phases of building a new image: from the breach with tradition and the formulation of a new, Palaiologan style, through the search for a new mode of expression to the stage of classicism and later its gradual relinquishment.[58]

Avoiding the traps which lead the first scholars of late Byzantine and Serbian painting of the early XIV century to formulate their one-sided interpretations and their territorial or "national" classifications, in his synthetic study, *Byzantinische Fresken in Jugoslawien*, V. J. Djurić discusses Serbian painting from the close of the XIII and the beginning of the XIV century under a chapter entitled "The Age of King Milutin". We find his views appropriate not only because art history of our day rejects the existence of "schools" but also because Serbian medieval painting belonged, almost entirely, to a much broader and longer tradition of East Christian culture and art which had none of the territorial or national partitions of today nor any of our concepts of likeness and difference. On the other hand, there were never any strictly separate phenomena in art, least of all in the Middle Ages, nor ever a total rejection of tradition and an unconditional quest for novelties. On the contrary, consciously or unconsciously, continuity was always respected – admittedly to a varying degree. At times older forms served as the seed of new inceptions or motivation for new and different expressions. Changes were natural and necessary in that unbroken chain and should be regarded in terms of the circular links with their own nuclei and concentric lines of expansion in time and space. Almost without exception, their names and qualifications are conditional, most often tied to prominent historical events and their protagonists. Serbian medieval art lasted for centuries, at times entirely or only partly inclined to the West and at others to Byzantium, reaching the heights of European artistic creation in certain moments but in others falling into shorter or longer periods of crisis. Nevertheless, it is incontestable that its development was channelled by strong personages, rulers, church prelates and members of literary and artistic circles, who rerouted or speeded up its currents and imbued it with special qualities. During the last decades of the XIII and the first years of the XIV century king Milutin and his many courtiers, nameless or known by name, certainly numbered among such inspirers along with the highest church prelates and representatives of the greatest monasteries as well as the artists brought from abroad and those of local provenance or residence who ennobled Serbian culture and art, established a continuity with times past and prepared them for the days to come. It seems that the epoch reached its zenith during the 1320's but this apogee would certainly have been impossible to attain without the thorough preparations which took place during the previous decade.

Any thorough approach and at all adequate interpretation of ancient Serbian art requires a series of preliminary steps: recording all the preserved works of art and those of which we know only from the sources, describing them, discovering, when possible, their ktetors and authors, dating them precisely or at least giving an approximete assumption. As a result of the endeavours of our predecessors, painting from this age in the lands of the Byzantine world, including Serbia, has been catalogued.[59] Many synthetic works, impregnated with the results of generations of earlier scholars which have greatly changed our understanding of late Byzantine painting, have been written and published in the form of books or studies as well as in thematic compendiums.[60] The turning point in the development of a different perception of XIII–XV century art occurred in 1958 at the Eleventh Congress of Byzantine Studies with the definition of fields of future research, delineation of spatial, chronological and stylistic boundaries of "Palaiologan art" and determination of methods of study. Thereafter, knowledge and understanding of this art were quick to grow, not only in reviews of the millennial history of Byzantine painting but in equal measure also in special studies of particular monuments of this age. The publication of monographs of almost all the most significant monuments dating from around the year 1300: the Chora, St. Mary Pammakaristos, Hagioi Theodoroi (Kilise Camii) in Constantinople,[61] St. Panteleimon, St. Euthymios, Holy Apostles, Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos in Thessaloni-



I

Petrova crkva in Ras, *St. Christopher*, around 1280

II

Djurdjevi Stupovi in Ras, Dragutin's chapel, *Holy Trinity*, 1283–1285

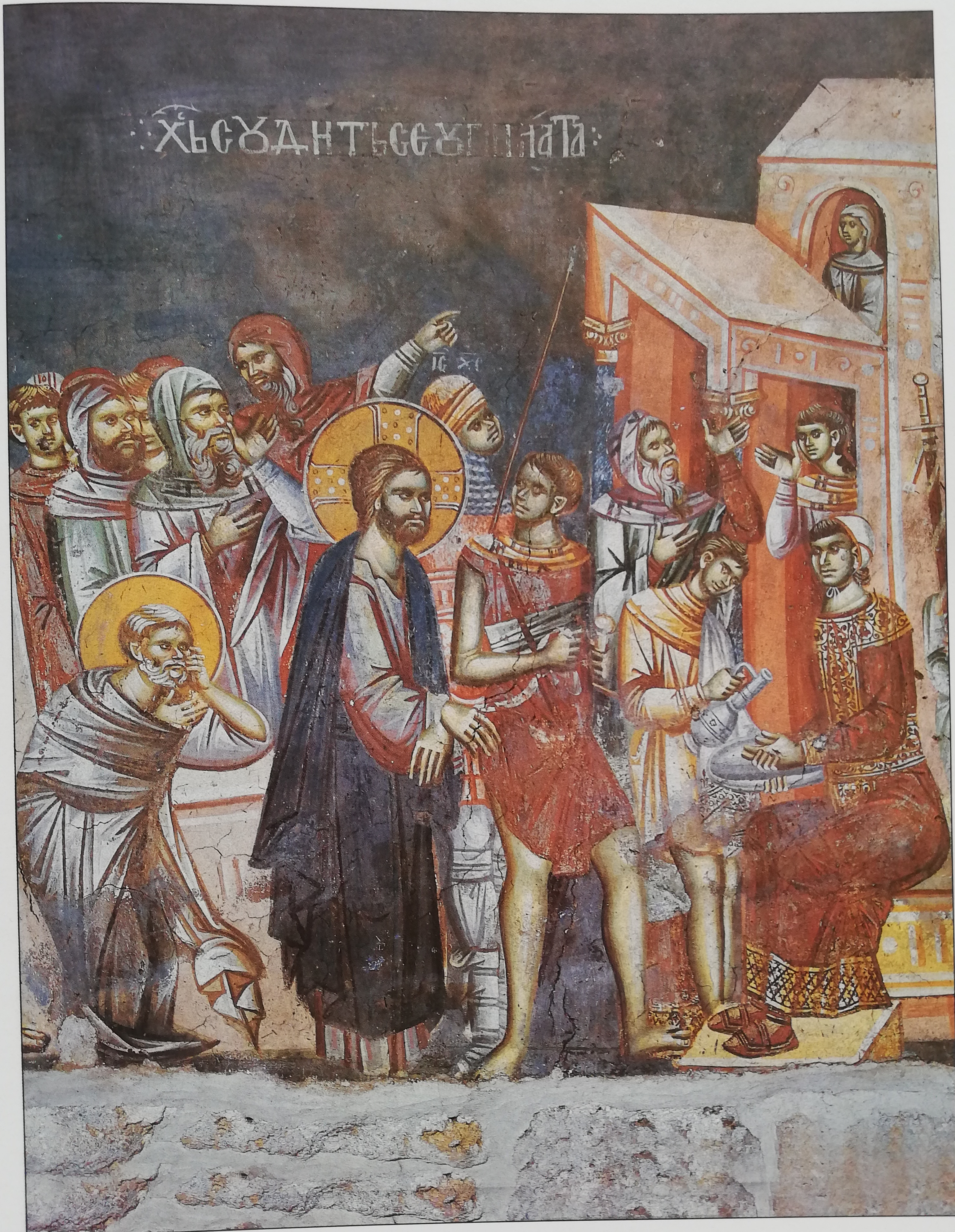


III

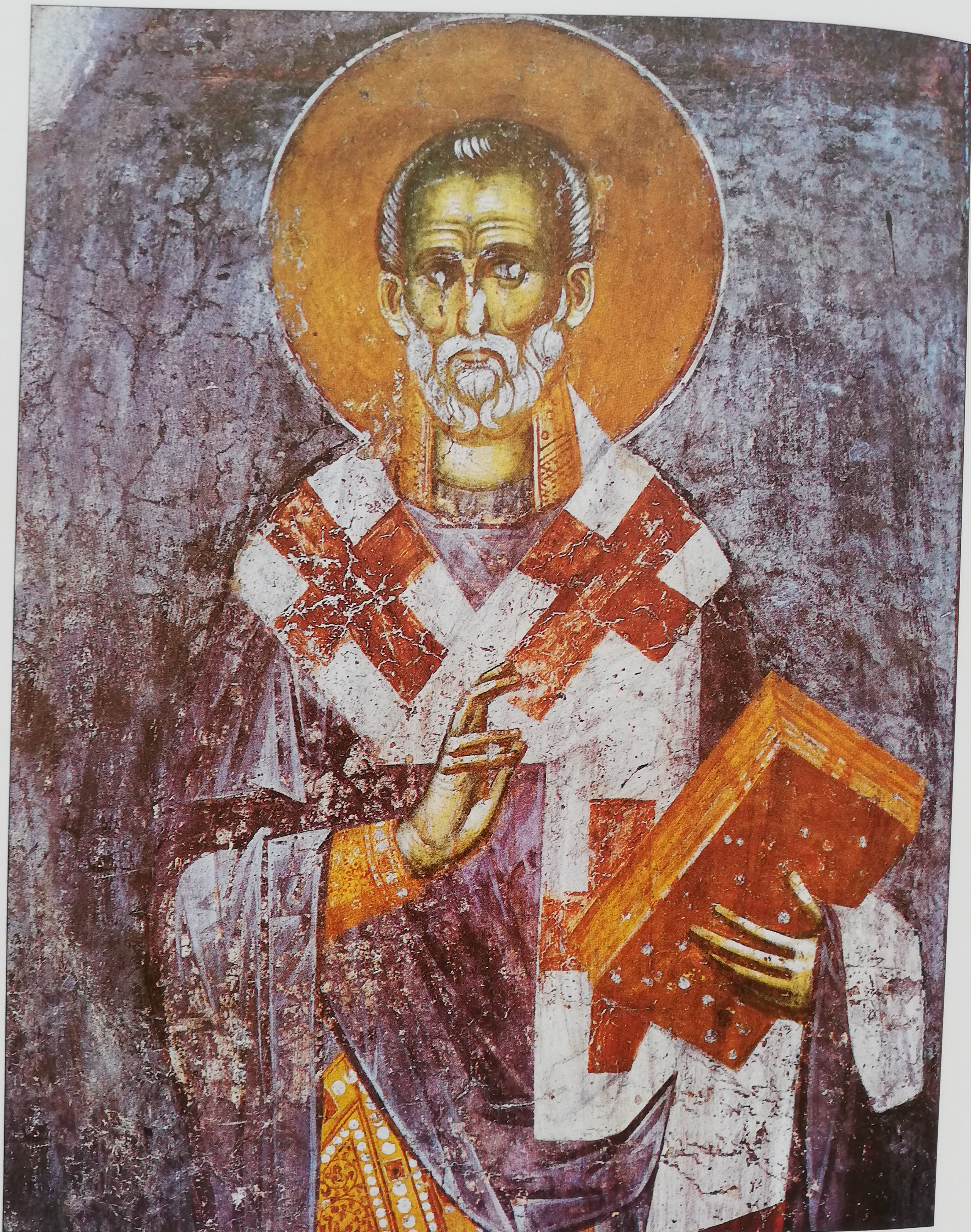
Peć, Holy Apostles, *Stefan Prvovenčani and Uroš I as monks*, around 1300



IV
Peć, Holy Apostles, *Christ before Annas*, detail, around 1300

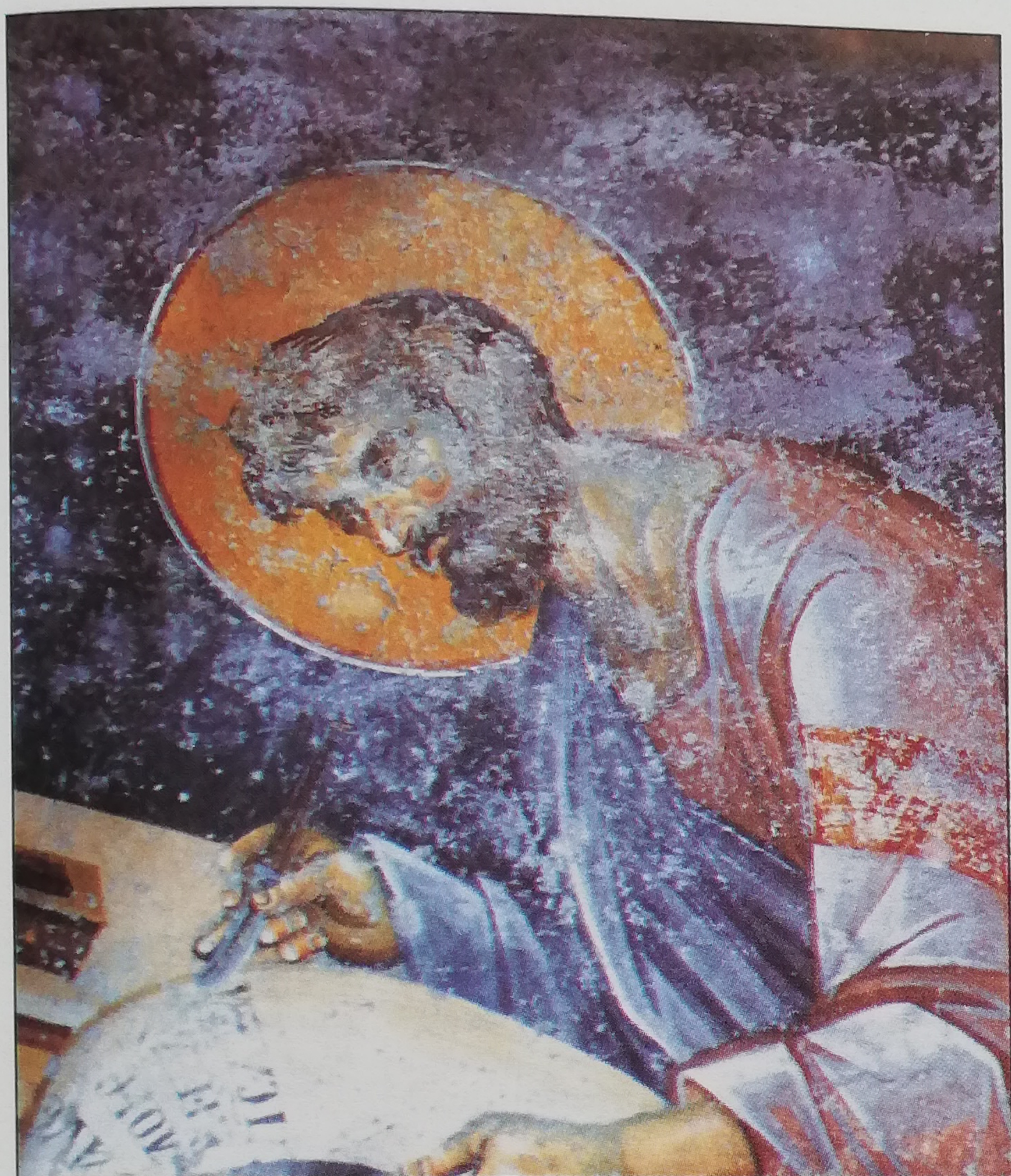


V
Peć, Holy Apostles, *Christ Tried by Pilate*, around 1300



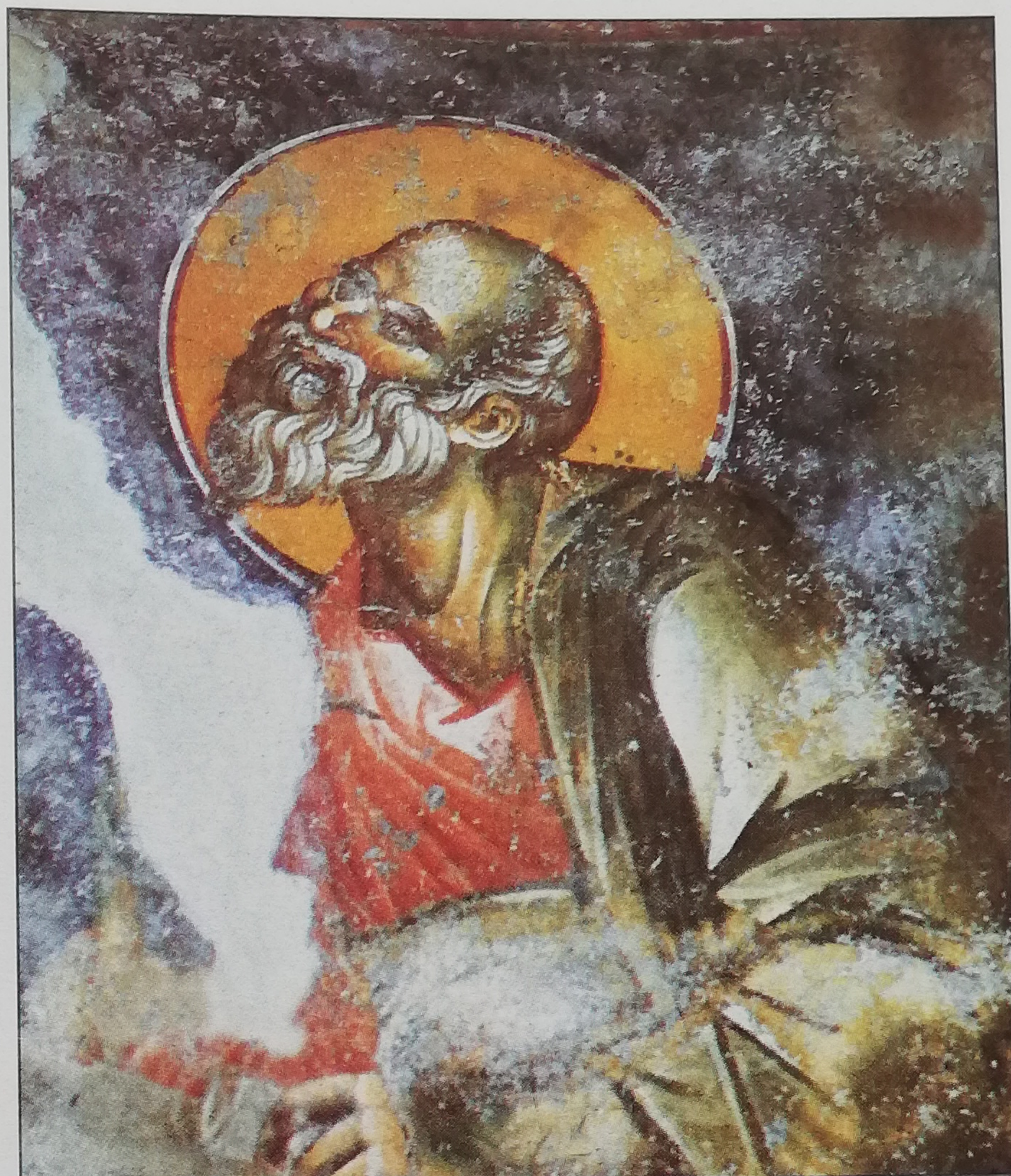
VI

Žiča, *St. Nicholas*, around 1310



VII

Žiča, *Evangelist Mark*, around 1310



VIII

Žiča, *Evangelist John*, around 1310

IX

Žiča, *Dormition of the Virgin*, around 1310



X
Prizren, Bogorodica Ljeviška, *Apostle Peter*, 1309–1313



7
Gračanica, around 1315

ki,[62] the Protaton on Mount Athos,[63] Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid,[64] Christ's church and that of St. Blasios in Veria,[65] manuscripts and icons of the epoch,[66] is certainly of great importance in perceiving the main lines of its development. Certain monuments such as the Hagioi Theodoroi in Constantinople, the Protaton, the katholikon of Vatopedi, the Virgin Peribleptos, Holy Trinity in Berat, St. Catherine in Thessaloniki and Aphendiko in Mistra, still await broader investigation.[67] Monuments in Serbia and abroad created under the patronage of king Milutin have not all been studied to the same extent. Some have recently received extensive monographs (Žiča, Bogorodica Ljeviška, Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos, Chilandar, Gračanica, Kraljeva crkva in Studenica, Staro Nagoričino).[68] Fine studies have been written on some of the others (Petrova crkva, icon of the apostles Peter and Paul in Rome, Djurdjevi Stupovi, Peć, Mušutište, Sušica, St. Prochor of Pčinja)[69] while the rest have been studied only partly (Arilje, Banjska, katholikon of Chilandar, St. Peter and Paul on the Lim, St. Nikita).[70]

Having reviewed all that has survived of the rich artistic heritage from the age of king Milutin (1282–1321), both in Serbia and the Byzantine cities and territories in which he was active as a patron of the arts, we shall proceed with observations of the development and changes this art had undergone during that time, discovering its nature and its peculiarities. We shall attempt to decipher the ideological messages of Serbian state and ecclesiastical history, at times even the destinies of individuals from those days, and to point out the main themes of this art, its characteristics, artistic qualities and identify the leading painters and their followers. For those reasons we shall leave aside many interesting phenomena as well as those iconographic and stylistic solutions which have not found broader application in Serbian painting of Milutin's era. As a result, at the end of the book we offer a survey of all the mural paintings and other works of art with information concerning their chronology, notes on all the preserved inscriptions and the artists who produced them as well as a review of existing bibliography.

[1] The best texts offering general insight into Serbian painting from the second half of the XI until the second half of the XIII century are: Demus, *Die Entstehung*, 26–30; Radojčić, *Slikarstvo*, 27–71, 77–81; Djurić, *La peinture murale serbe au XIIIe siècle*, 145–167; Lazarev, *Storia*, 273–352 (passim); Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken*, 33–60; Djurić, *La peinture murale byzantine*, 198–212, 219–220, 238–248 as well as a series of compendiums, monographs and articles.

[2] Recent investigation has shown that work on the construction of the church of St. Achilleios in Arilje began in the 1280's and that it was finished around the time of the change on the Serbian throne (M. Čanak-Medić, *Iz istorije Arilja*, Saopštenja XIV, 1982, 38–41). Recently it has also become clear that the narthex of Djurdjevi Stupovi was decorated with frescoes before 1282 (Z. Zeković, *Konzervacija zidnih slika manastirskog kompleksa Djurdjevi Stupovi u Rasu*, Glasnik DKS 5, 1981, 45; Marjanović-Dušanić, *Vladarske insignije*, 50).

[3] About Dragutin's abdication from the throne in favour of his younger brother Milutin, his reasons and the consequences of this act cf. Dinić, *Odnos*, 49–52; L. Mavromatis, *La fondation de l'Empire serbe – le kralj Milutin*, Thessalonique 1978, 15–22; J. Kalić, *Deževo u srednjem veku*, ZRVI 20 (1981), 75–76; *Vizantijski izvori*, VI, 44–45 (Lj. Maksimović); Djurić, *Deževski sabor*, 169–193.

[4] G. Subotić, *Kraljica Jelena Anžujska – ktitor crkvenih spomenika u Primorju*, Istorijski glasnik 1–2 (1958), 131–147; V. Korać, *Sv. Sergije-Srdj i Vakh na Bojani*, Starinar XII (1961), 35–43; id., *Graditeljska škola Pomorja*, Beograd 1965, 28, 65–68, 89–93; Tatić-Djurić, *Ikona apostola Petra i Pavla*, 11; V. Tomić-De Muro, *Srpske ikone u crkvi Sv. Nikole u Bariju, Italija*, Zbornik LU 2 (1966), 107–123.

[5] In the peace treaty emperor Andronikos II "bestowed" upon his son-in-law the conquered regions (cf. one of the king's charters issued shortly after 1299: L. Slaveva, *Gramota na kral Milutin za kelijata Sv. Petka vo s. Tmorane*, Spomenici na Makedonija, I, 255–256); V. Mošin, *Balkanskata diplomatija i dinastičkite brakovi na kralot Milutin*, Spomenici na Makedonija, II, 188–189; L. Mavromatis, *La fondation de l'Empire serbe*, 33–50; *Istorija srpskog naroda*, I, 445–446 (Lj. Maksimović); *Vizantijski izvori*, VI, 95, 116–117 et passim (I. Djurić).

[6] The entire course of the hostilities between the brothers is explained by Dinić, *Odnos*, 49–80 (with minor corrections in recent historiography). About the date and reasons of Stefan's rebellion Lj. Kovačević, *Nekoliko hronoloških ispravaka o srpskoj istoriji*, GNČ XLVI (1937), 27–30; I. Božić, *O položaju Zete u državi Nemanjića*, Istorijski glasnik 1–2 (1950), 116–119; L. Mavromatis, *La fondation de l'Empire serbe*, 70; *Istorija srpskog naroda*, I, 462–465 (S. Ćirković); *Vizantijski izvori*, VI, 178–179 (S. Ćirković – B. Ferjančić).

[7] This problem has been thoroughly investigated so that, in this instance, we point out only some of the general studies regarding the question: S. Novaković, *Vizantijski činovi i titule u srpskim zemljama XI–XV veka*, Glas SKA LXXVIII (1908), 255–267; V. Mošin, *Vizantijski uticaj u Srbiji u XIV veku*, Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis III (1937), 147–160; G. Ostrogorsky, *Problèmes des relations byzantino-serbes au XIVe siècle*, Proceedings of the XIIIth Int. Congr. of Byz. Studies, London 1947, 41–55.

[8] Cf. Djurić, *L'art des Paléologues et l'Etat serbe*, 179–191; *Istorija srpskog naroda*, I, 476–495 (G. Babić).

[9] C. I. Jireček, *Handelstrassen und Bergwerke von Serbien und Bosnien Wahrend des Mittelaters*, Abhandlungen der königl. bohm. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften. VI Folge, 10 Band, Classe für Philosophie, Geschichte und Philologie, Nr. 2, Prag 1879, 43–48; A. Schmaus, *Zur Frage der Kulturorientirung der Serben im Mittelalter*, Südost-Forschungen XV (1956) 187–188; V. Korać, *Izmedju Vizantije i Zapada*, Beograd 1987. Apart from the mentioned churches on the Adriatic coast and in its hinterland (cf. note 4), other churches in Serbia were also being renovated and redecorated but their frescoes are poorly preserved: M. Šuput, *Crkva u Starom Trgu*, Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta XII/1 (1974), 321–329; M. Čanak-Medić, *L'architecture de l'époque de Nemanja, II, Eglises de la vallée du Lim et du littoral adriatique*, Beograd 1989, 203–208; *Istorija srpskog naroda*, I, 278–280, 283–286 (V. J. Djurić).

[10] Cf. B. Radojković, *Nakit kod Srba od kraja XII do kraja XVIII veka*, Beograd 1969, 104, 158; V. Han, *Tendences gothiques dans les arts mineurs de la Serbie médiévale*, Actes du XIVe congr. int. des études byz., III, Bucarest 1976, 328; *Istorija primenjene umetnosti kod Srba*, Beograd 1977, 86, 160, 283; S. Radojčić, *Hilandarski diptih. Novi prilog poznavanju mletačke minijature kasnog XIII veka*, Glas SAN CCXXXIV/7 (1959), 49–54.

[11] On the architecture and sculpture of Banjska cf. Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 114; M. M. Vasić, *Žiča i Lazarica*, Beograd 1928, 64–74; M. Šuput, *Manastir Banjska*, Beograd 1989; on the church of St. Sergius and Bacchus on the Bojana V. Korać, *Graditeljska škola Pomorja*, 17–33; on western influences on Chilandar V. Korać, *Arheološka opažanja o pripati kneza Lazara u Hilandaru*, Hilandarski zbornik 4 (1978), 81–84.

[12] Cf. Djurić, *L'art des Paléologues et l'Etat serbe*, 179–191; *Vizantijski izvori*, VI, 111–114 (I. Djurić).

[13] *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina Historia*, ed. L. Schopenus, I, Bonnae 1829, 241–242.

[14] V. Marković, *Pravoslavno monaštvo i manastiri u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji*, Sr. Karlovci 1920, 89–90; S. Nikolovska, *Izgradeni i obnoveni manastiri i crkvi od kralot Milutin*, Spomenici na Makedonija, II, 509–519. The king also restored or endowed many monasteries throughout the Byzantine Empire, especially in Thessaloniki, Constantinople and on Mount Athos and even in Palestine, on the Sinai and in Apulia (Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 173–180).

[15] D. Bogdanović, *Nove težnje u srpskoj književnosti prvih decenija XIV veka*, Symposium de Gračanica, 85–96; id., *Istorija stare srpske književnosti*, Beograd 1980, 164–175; Dj. Trifunović, *Stara srpska književnost – osnove*, Beograd 1994, 191–219.

[16] Apart from the previous note, cf. C. Müller-Landau, *Studien zum Stil der Sava-Vita Teodosius*, München 1972; G. Subotić, *Teodosijeva žitija i srpski živopis Milutinovog doba*, Stara književnost, Beograd 1972, 398–403; Teodosije, *Žitije svetog Save*, Beograd 1974, pp. VII–XL (D. Bogdanović); M.

Kašanin, *Srpska književnost u srednjem veku*, Beograd 1990, 178–209.

[17] Cf. Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, pp. V–XXIX (N. Radojčić); M. Kašanin, *Srpska književnost u srednjem veku*, 210–233; Dj. Trifunović, *Stara srpska književnost*, 200–203.

[18] It is interesting, however, that there are no figurative representations in many books copied at that time on Mount Athos and in Serbia (the later inserted leafs with images of the evangelists in the gospel of Kumanica do not date from the beginning of the XIV century), the only exception being the somewhat more elaborately painted ornaments and initials of the geometric, floral and fantastic decoration, cf. S. Radojčić, *Stare srpske minijature*, Beograd 1950, 13–14; J. Maksimović, *Srpske srednjovekovne minijature*, Beograd 1983, 37–42), so that they were not included in this book dealing with the painting of Milutin's era.

[19] About him Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 246; S. Stanojević, *Srpski arhiepiskopi od Save II do Danila II (1263–1326)*, Glas SKA CLIII (1933), 69–71.

[20] In addition to the works cited in note 16, about Danilo, monk and bishop, cf. Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 248–287 (written by his disciple); M. A. Purković, *Srpski episkopi i mitropoliti srednjega veka*, Hrišćansko delo III/4–6 (1937), 22–26, 35–36; V. A. Mošin – M. A. Purković, *Hilandarski igumani srednjega veka*, Skoplje 1940, 18–27, as well as the latest compendium monograph *L'archevêque Danilo et son époque*, Beograd 1991.

[21] *SSZN*, I, 17. About Grigorije II cf. D. Kostić, *Kada je Teodosije pisao Život sv. Save*, Glasnik Jugoslovenskog profesorskog društva XIV/3 (1933), 225–226.

[22] Cf. *SSZN*, I, 19–21; V. A. Mošin – M. A. Purković, *Hilandarski igumani srednjega veka*, 16, 36; Todić, *Gračanica*, 70–71, 168–169; Todić, *Nagoričino*, 25, 123.

[23] Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 116, 247, 286; S. N. Vulović, *Beleške o arhiepiskopu Nikodimu*, Glas SKA XLIII (1894), 1–15; S. Stanojević, *Srpski arhiepiskopi od Save II do Danila II*, 71–78; V. A. Mošin – M. A. Purković, *Hilandarski igumani srednjega veka*, 27–30; *Srbljak*, II, Beograd 1970, 207, 235.

[24] D. Bogdanović, *Istorija stare srpske književnosti*, 164–166, 168.

[25] M. M. Vasić, *Žiča i Lazarica*, 183; L. Mirković, *Tipik arhiepiskopa Nikodima (I)*, Bogoslovlje XVI/2 (1957), 18–19. Nikodim's references to St. Sava are not accidental, cf. P. Simić, *Rad svetog Save na osavremenjivanju bogosluženja u Srpskoj crkvi*, Sveti Sava, spomenica povodom osamstogodišnjice rodjenja 1175–1975, Beograd 1977, 181–205. On the liturgy and its influences on Serbian painting, id., *Bogosluženje i freske XIII i XIV veka*, Mileševa dans l'histoire du peuple serbe, Beograd 1987, 103–108.

[26] R. Ljubinković, *Les influences de la vie politique contemporaine sur la décoration des églises d'Ohrid*, Actes du XIIe congrès int. d'ét. byz., III, Beograd 1964, 221–222; cf. also Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken*, 65–67.

[27] Cf. the basic literature: G. Millet, *L'ancien art serbe. Les églises*, Paris 1919, 103–104; B. Koneski, *Crkvenoslovenskiot jazik na freskite vo Makedonija*, Simpozijum 1100-godišnina na Kiril Solunski, II, Skopje 1970, 101–103; Djurić, *L'art des Paléologues et l'Etat serbe*, 187–188.

[28] Milutin's charter issued in 1299/1300 to the monastery of St. Georgios Gorgos has been published several times, best by: R. M. Grujić, *Tri hilandarske povelje*, Zbornik za istoriju Južne Srbije i susednih oblasti 1 (1936), 5–24 and *Gramoti na manastirot Sv. Georgi-Gorg skopski*, Spomenici na Makedonija, I, 209–238. The most serious attempt to determine the location of the monastery is that of K. Petrov, *Identificiranje na lokalitetot na manastirot Sv. Georgi Gorgos*, Godišen zbornik na Filozofskiot fakultet 20 (1968), 255–286.

[29] The most reliable testimony about Milutin's activities related to Chilandar is that offered by Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 175–176. On the architecture of Milutin's age in Chilandar S. Nenadović, *Arhitektura Hilandara – crkve i paraklisi*, Hilandarski zbornik 3 (1974), 87–146; Djurić, *Chilandar*, 70–76. On the date of the fresco decoration of the katholikon Djurić, *Narthex de Chilandar*, 116–118. On the king's other endowments in Chilandar and his donations to the monastery Djurić, *Chilandar*, 76, 78, 80–81, 86, 88, 92, 96–98.

[30] Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 283; Mijović, *Žiča*, 5–52 (M. Kašanin); G. Subotić, *Žiča Monastery*, Belgrade 1988, 32.

[31] Radojčić, *Slikarstvo*, 74–76 and Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken*, 67 (also, Djurić, *Pećka patrijaršija*, 121–130) date these frescoes to the period around the year 1300, and B. Todić (*Patrijarh Joanikije – ktitor fresaka u crkvi Sv. apostola u Peći*, Zbornik LU 16, 1980, 86) associates them with king Milutin.

[32] Cf. S. Nenadović, *Bogorodica Ljeviška*, Beograd 1963; Babić, *Bogorodica Ljeviška*. – The king also donated the church of St. Nicholas in the upper town of Prizren to Ljeviška and this church served as a shelter for its treasures "in times of danger" (I. Jastrebov, *Hrisovulja Dečanskog kralja od godine 1326*, GSUD XLIX, 1881, 363).

[33] About the founding of Banjska, its chronology, architecture and holdings cf. Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 192–194; S. Novaković, *Manastir Banjska – zadužbina kralja Milutina*, Glas SKA XXXII (1892), 4–14; M. M. Vasić, *Žiča i Lazarica*, 64–74; V. Korać, *Graditeljska škola Pomorja*, 102–106, 203–207; G. A. Škrivanić, *Vlastelinstvo Sv. Stefana u Banjskoj*, Istorijski časopis 6 (1956), 177–198.

[34] About Milutin's charter issued to the church of Sts. Peter and Paul cf. Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici*, 597–598 and Mošin, *Povelje kralja Milutina*, 66–67; about Danilo cf. M. Janković, *Danilo, banjski i humski episkop*, L'archeveque Danilo II et son époque, 83–88; on the architecture of the church D. Nagorni, *Die Kirche Sv. Petar in Bijelo Polje, Montenegro*, München 1978; on the wall paintings Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken*, 74 and note 56 (with bibliography published until 1973).

[35] Recently, two extensive books about this church have been published, based also on numerous earlier studies concerning Gračanica: S. Ćurčić, *Gračanica. King Milutin's Church and Its Place in Late Byzantine Architecture*, The Pennsylvania State University 1979 and Todić, *Gračanica*.

36 Todić, *Nagoričino* (on the history, architecture and wall paintings of the church).

37 Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 180–181; *Svetostefanska hrisovulja* (edited by Lj. Kovačević), Spomenik SKA IV (1989), 9.

38 This church also has a modern and all-encompassing monograph published not so long ago, Babić, *Kraljeva crkva*.

39 The most reliable testimony indicating king Milutin as the founder of the church of St. Nikita in Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 181. There are numerous charters related to this church but, so far, they have not received a definite analysis which could distinguish the originals from the forgeries and determine the results of interpolation in them. Existing literature is also not uniform in determining the date of the frescoes, ranging from 1307 to 1320, cf. the latest work on this subject Miljković-Pepek, *Crkvata Sv. Nikita*, 381–383.

40 Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 173–184, 192–194 (the cited passage on page 173–174). One by one, Danilo lists Milutin's churches in the Prodromos quarter of Constantinople, together with palaces and a hospital, his churches of St. Nicholas and St. George as well as numerous palaces in Thessaloniki, his donations to the church of the Virgin at Treskavac and to the monastery of St. George in the Kičevo region, and makes a general mention of the monasteries on the Sinai and in Jerusalem.

41 About the wall paintings in the church Ξυγγόπουλος, *Οι τοιχογραφίες του Αγίου Νικολάου;* Τσιτουρίδου, *Άγιος Νικόλαος Ορφανός*; about the architecture A. Ξυγγόπουλος, *Τέσσαρες μικροί ναοί της Θεσσαλονίκης εκ των χρονών των Παλαιολόγων*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1952, 36–44. Data on this church as Milutin's endowment in Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 179.

42 Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 174–181. The church of the monastery of the Holy Archangels in Jerusalem is preserved, although with later reconstructions and without its original wall paintings, V. Nedomački, *Manastir arhandjela Mihaila i Gavrila u Jerusalimu – zadužbina kralja Milutina*, Zbornik LU 16 (1980), 25–69. On Milutin's endowments in Thessaloniki cf. P. Mijović, *O gradjevinama kralja Milutina u Solunu*, Starinar XVIII (1968), 233–237; Kisas, *Solun*, 29–42.

43 Cf. Lj. Stojanović, *Stari srpski hrisovulji, akti, biografije, letopisi, tipici, pomenici, zapisi i dr.*, Spomenik SKA III (1890), 95, 125, 139; V. Marković, *Pravoslavno monaštvo i manastiri u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji*, 95–97; M. A. Purković, *Popis crkava u staroj srpskoj državi*, Skoplje 1938, 12, 34, 44; Petković, *Pregled*, 5, 36, 58, 146, 154, 179, 228, 230, 244, 265, 269, 292, 298, 299, 302, 335; K. Petrov, *Pregled na sakralnite spomenici vo Skopje i okolinata od XI do XIX vek*, Spomenici na Makedonija, I, 76–83; S. Nikolovska, *Izgradeni i obnoveni manastiri i crkvi od kralot Milutin*, Spomenici na Makedonija, II, 509–519. Apart from these, several other churches are also ascribed to king Milutin.

44 *SSZN*, III, 73, 76; Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 283; Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici*, 597–598.

45 I. Jastrebov, *Hrisovulja Dečanskog kralja od godine 1326*, 364; M. M. Vasić, *Crkva Sv. Bogorodice na Ljeviši u Prizrenu i prizrenski episkop Damjan*, PKJIF 1 (1921), 93–101; Dj. Sp. Radojičić, *O Pomeniku Sv. Bogorodice Ljeviške*, Starinar 15 (1940), 61; S. Nenadović, *Bogorodica Ljeviška*, 25–27, 180–185; Babić, *Bogorodica Ljeviška*, 43, 50–61 (D. Panić).

46 *SSZN*, I, 19, 21; Todić, *Nagoričino*, 26 et passim, drawing 1–2.

47 *SSZN*, I, 20; R. Nikolić, *Natpis na Kraljevoj crkvi u Studenici*, Saopštenja IX (1970), 76–77; Babić, *Kraljeva crkva*, 20–21.

48 Cf. note 35.

49 Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 193–194.

50 *SSZN*, I, 20; on the architecture of the church S. M. Nenadović, *Beleške s puta po Kosmetu*, Muzeji 7 (1952), 168–171, on its frescoes Djurić, *Nepoznati spomenici*, 61–67; Djordjević, *Zidno slikarstvo*, 50, 131 et passim.

51 The most comprehensive work on this church and its frescoes is Babić, *Sušica*, 303–339.

52 So far the best work about them is Subotić – Todorović, *Sveti Prohor Pčinjski*, 117–137.

53 M. Šuput, *Crkva u Starom Trgu*, 321–329; M. Čanak-Medić, *L'architecture de l'époque de Nemanja, II, Eglises de la vallée du Lim et du littoral adriatique*, 208–251 (mention of the frescoes and their dating on page 205).

54 Cf., along with other works, P. Muretoff, *La peinture byzantine*, Paris 1935, 117, 127; Millet, *Recherches*, 630; Petković, *La peinture serbe*, II, 17 et passim; Demus, *Die Entstehung*, 33–63; Lazarev, *Storia*, 273–442; Radojčić, *Uzori i dela*, 125–153; *Istorija srpskog naroda*, I, 476–495 (G. Babić-Djordjević); Velmans, *La peinture murale*, 11–28.

55 Radojčić, *Slikarstvo*, 87.

56 Hallensleben, *Die Malerschule*, 14–15.

57 Djurić, *L'art des Paléologues et l'Etat serbe*, 179–191; Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken*, 66–67, 75–76.

58 Djurić, *La peinture byzantine vers 1300*, 67–78.

59 Petković, *La peinture serbe*, II, 16–37; Petković, *Pregled*, passim; Velmans, *La peinture murale*, 135–243 (passim).

60 Demus, *Die Entstehung*, 1–63; Miljković-Pepek, *Deloto*; Hallensleben, *Die Malerschule*; Lazarev, *Storia*, 273–442; Radojčić, *Slikarstvo*, 85–119; Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken*, 59–76; Chatzidakis, *Classicisme*, 150–170; *The Kariye Djami*, IV; Radojčić, *Uzori i dela*, 125–154; Radojčić, *Klassizissmus*, 189–205; Mouriki, *Stylistic Trends*, 55–83; Tsitouridou, *La peinture monumentale à Salonique*, 9–19; H. Belting, *Le problème du style dans l'art byzantin des derniers siècles*, La Civiltà bizantina del XII al XV secolo, Roma 1982, 294–308.

61 *The Kariye Djami*, I–IV; W. Grape, *Zum Stil der Mosaiken in der Kilise Camii in Istanbul*, Panthéon 31 (1974), 3–13; H. Belting – C. Mango – D. Mouriki, *The Mosaics and Frescoes of St. Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) in Istanbul*, Washington 1978.

62 A. Cituridu, *Zidno slikarstvo Svetog Pantelejmona u Solunu*,

Zograf 6 (1975), 14–20; Τσιτουρίδου, *Άγιος Νικόλαος Ορφανός*; Stephan, *Ein byzantinisches Bildensamble*; Gouma-Peterson, *The Frescoes*, 111–159. Wall paintings from this epoch exist also in the churches of St. Catherine, Hosios David and the Virgin tôn Halkeon, only mentined in literature.

[63] A. Xyngopoulos, *Manuel Panselinos*, Athens 1956; Δ. Καλομοιράκης, *Ερμηνευτικές παρατηρήσεις στο εικονο-γραφικό πρόγραμμα του Πρωτάτου*, ΔΧΑΕ 4/15 (1991), 197–200; V. J. Djurić, *Les conceptions hagioritiques dans la peinture de Prôtaton*, Hilandarski zbornik 8 (1991), 37–81. On Mount Athos, apart from those in the Protaton, frescoes from this epoch exist also in the Great Lavra (A. Xyngopoulos, *Nouveaux témoignages de l'activité des peintres macédoniens au Mont Athos*, BZ 52, 1959, 62–64), Vatopedi (Miljković-Pepek, *Deloto*, 226–227; A. Xyngopoulos, *Mosaiques et fresques de l'Athos,* Le millénaire du Mont Athos, II, Chevetogne 1964, 254; Mouriki, *Stylistic Trends*, 66; Τσιγαρίδας, *Η μνημειακή ζωγραφική,* 304-320; Τσιγαρίδας, *Η Μονή Βατοπεδίου,* 401–423, πίν. 154–213) and Chilandar (cf. infra).

[64] The church still does not have a comprehensive monograph, so far the best work is Miljković-Pepek, *Deloto*, passim; its wall paintings, however, are the subject of a series of papers and studies, cf. C. Grozdanov, *Studii za ohridskiot živopis*, Skopje 1990, 84–101.

[65] Πελεκανίδης, *Καλλιέργης;* Θ. Παπαζώτος, *Η Βέροια και οι ναοί της (11ος–18ος αι),* Αθήνα 1994, 172–175, 253–257.

[66] V. J. Djurić, *Icônes de Yougoslavie*, Beograd 1961, 19–25; Belting, *Das illuminierte Buch;* M. Chatzidakis, *Une icône en mosaïques de Lavra*, JÖB 21 (1972), 73–81; *Οι θησαυροί του Αγίου Όρους*, I–IV, Αθήνα 1974–1991; Buchtal, *Toward a History*, 145–146; J. Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453*, I–II, Leiden 1981; R. S. Nelson, *Theodore Hagiopetrites. A Late Byzantine Scribe and Illuminator*, Wien 1991 and a series of other books, discussions and contributions.

[67] Cf. W. Grape, op. cit.; A. Ducellier, *Observations sur quelques monuments de l'Albanie*, Revue archéologique II (1965), 196–197; Mouriki, *Stylistic Trends*, 60–61; M. Chatzidakis, *Mistra*, Athènes 1981, 59–67; Djurić, *La peinture byzantine vers 1300*, 67–78; Τσιγαρίδας, *Η Μονή Βατοπεδίου*, 401–423.

[68] Mijović, *Žiča*, 105–199; Babić, *Bogorodica Ljeviška*, 47–104; Τσιτουρίδου, *Άγιος Νικόλαος Ορφανός;* Djurić, *Chilandar*, 64, 81–98; Todić, *Gračanica*; Babić, *Kraljeva crkva*, 61–219; Todić, *Nagoričino*, 71–138.

[69] We list here only the most important and latest works: Djurić, *Nepoznati spomenici*, 61–67; Tatić-Djurić, *Ikona apostola Petra i Pavla*, 11–16; Babić, *Sušica*, 303–309; Djurić, *Istorijske kompozicije (II),* 131–137; Ćorović-Ljubinković, *Živopis Svetoga Petra*, 44–47; Djurić, *Pećka patrijaršija*, 121–130; Subotić – Todorović, *Sveti Prohor Pčinjski*, 117–137.

[70] Radojčić, *Slikarstvo*, 109–112; Miljković-Pepek, *Deloto*, passim; Djurić, *La peinture de Chilandar*, 31–41; M. Čanak-Medić, *Sveti Ahilije u Arilju*, Beograd 1982, 16–50 (with a bibliography of earlier works); M. Šuput, *Manastir Banjska*, Beograd 1989, 34–35.

THE IMAGE OF SERBIAN HISTORY



During his long reign (1282–1321), king Milutin was portrayed so many times that he has no equal in any other Serbian ruler except, perhaps, tsar Dušan. Leaving aside for the moment his portraits as a prince, preserved in Sopoćani, it is obvious that none of the churches the king restored were left without his image and easy to conclude that he appears even in those where his patronage is uncertain, or where he most definitely played no part at all as a ktetor, as well as on icons donated to famous shrines and coins produced in his mints. Rather reliably dated, to a measure which allows the discernment of the order of their appearance, these portraits present Milutin's easily recognisable image – from the days of his youth, as in Djurdjevi Stupovi, to a ripe old age in Gračanica and Chilandar. Moreover, his dress and royal insignia mirror the transformations in royal iconography while the locations chosen for his portraits, as well as the personages surrounding them, reveal deeper connotations of the king's images. Apart from depicting the devout act of presenting offerings to Christ – the main subject of donor portraits repeated throughout the Middle Ages – portraits of king Milutin, more than all the other portraits seen in Serbian medieval art, convey the complexity of his epoch weighty with intricate questions of succession to the throne and the king's relations with his ancestors, his brother Dragutin, his sons as well as his ties with Constantinople, emperor Andronikos II and a number of other phenomena. Inspired by the tumultuous events which took place between 1282 and 1321 – Dragutin's abdication in Deževo in favour of his brother, their collaboration and subsequent hostilities, the political marriages of Milutin, most impor-

tantly that to a Byzantine princess, the rebellion of his son Stefan and the promotion of Konstantin as the heir to the throne in 1320 – Milutin's portraits are a true mirror of history of his day.

Apart from such representations of Milutin, Serbian art of this period also includes the portraits of his mother Jelena and father Uroš, not lacking in ideological overtones, as well as those of his other ancestors and relatives, beginning with Stefan Nemanja, Dragutin and his family, St. Sava and practically every archbishop of the Serbian church, from its first prelates to Milutin's contemporaries, local bishops in their respective churches and, finally, images of Byzantine emperors. The reasons for their appearance are easily explained especially when compared with similar representations in Byzantine and earlier Serbian art which provided the basic concepts and iconographic models. Their meaning becomes even easier to comprehend once adequate attention is devoted to the scenes which surround them. As a rule, portraits were conceived as a constituent element of the overall programme of fresco decoration and their messages thus given more clarity. Apart from the universally accepted and venerated Christian saints, images of local saints whose cults were territorially confined were also painted in Serbian art of this period. On the other hand, members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy – archbishops, bishops and hegoumenoi – who either played minor roles in raising and decorating the churches, or were impelled by modesty to leave out their own portraits, had images of their holy guardians painted in their place on prominent locations.

In order to explain this gallery of personages from Serbian history as best we can, above all the portraits of king Milutin, his contemporaries and ancestors, we shall divide them into groups based on similar iconographic and conceptual solutions trusting that, in doing so, our explications will be more thorough and the image of Serbian history of this age better elucidated.[1]

The Harmony of Rule After the Change on the Throne

The rise of king Milutin to the Serbian throne in 1282 was described in full detail by archbishop Danilo: king Dragutin, the sovereign who came to power in 1276 by forcefully taking the throne from his father, king Uroš I, having fallen from his horse while riding in the vicinity of the fortress of Jeleč, broke his leg and was badly injured. This caused great alarm and fear in the land. The liturgical character of Dragutin's biography which renders this description, and the undeniable ideological overtone of the text, impelled the author to assign this accident to Dragutin's penance for having raised his hand against his own father. Danilo's account of alarm and fear, of neighbouring emperors in particular, reveals the actual danger of an imminent attack from the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII and his allies as well as the probable existence of internal strife caused by Dragutin's physical incapability. At the same time, it justifies the subsequent change on the throne. Having immediately sent for his brother, Dragutin handed over to Milutin his throne and royal insignia: the crown, the royal robes, his horse and weapons. Following an established model for such transfers of power, Dragutin instructed his brother wisely. At this point Danilo stresses again the abdicating king's remorse for having forcefully deposed his father and establishes the legitimacy of Milutin's rise to power in the following, presumed, words of the ex-ruler: "And you, my dear and beloved brother, take my imperial crown and sit upon the throne of your father." The fine syntax of Danilo's sentence reveals the essential point of this change on the Serbian throne: although Milutin receives his crown from his brother, he is actually promoted as his father's heir hence determining the line of succession to the Serbian throne, an important moment in Serbian dynastic ideology which permeated the entire scope of historical imagery.

Danilo's text offers no definite data concerning the agreement reached between the two brothers at their "secret consultations" held in Deževo. Still, owing to the work of Georgios Pachimer and the anonymous author of "Descriptio Europae Orientalis" we do have information regarding the crucial subject of their negotiations. According to their accounts, generally accepted as reliable by contemporary scholars, the incontestable sovereignty which Milutin received in Deževo was strictly limited to the period of his own reign and he was to be succeeded on the throne by Dragutin's sons. It was decided then, as attested by Danilo and other contemporaries, that the northern territories of the Serbian state be handed over to the administration of Dragutin who was to rule independently. His lands were soon augmented by holdings reaching all the way to the banks of the Sava and across the Drina which he received as a gift from his father-in-law and brother-in-law, Ladislaus IV. Note should also be made of the fact that the agreement of

Deževo did not diminish the scope of the territory which had already been under the control of their mother Jelena since 1276 and the deposition of king Uroš I. It included the vast region of Zeta, territories around the upper flow of the Ibar as well as cities on the Adriatic coast. Brotherly harmony between Milutin and Dragutin which lasted for nearly two decades after the Deževo proceedings is demonstrated especially well by their cooperation in military campaigns against Byzantium (1283–1284) and Drman and Kudelin (1298) as well as by the mutual respect of the agreement they had reached and confirmed not only by written sources but also by the frescoes of Djurdjevi Stupovi and Arilje as well as their portraits on an icon in Rome.[2]

Soon after the Deževo agreement and the change on the throne, king Stefan Dragutin reconstructed the entrance tower in the monastery of Djurdjevi Stupovi, turning it into a chapel of unknown dedication. This was Dragutin's second large-scale enterprise in this monastery founded by the progenitor of the dynasty. The first, undertaken while he was still the sole ruler of the entire state, was tied to the renovation of the narthex of the main church and the construction of a new refectory, all with the intention of making this monastery his final resting place.[3] The appearance of king Dragutin's portrait proves that the frescoes in the narthex of the main church date from the period of his independent rule (1276–1282). This is a frontal representation of the sovereign wearing a dark violet divetesion and yellow loros with a stemma on his head and a large cross-shaped staff and red akakia in his hands. The stance and insignia bring this portrait of Dragutin quite close to the official representations of Byzantine emperors and it could well be said that its solemn appearance represents a turning point in the long line of images of Serbian rulers of the XIII century. Although rendered as a second ktetor (the long inscription which once stood by this figure has vanished), Dragutin's portrait primarily exalts the king's sovereign power through insignia adopted from Byzantine royal iconography.[4] At perhaps nearly the same time, the king appears once again in a similar stance in Gradac, by the ktetor's composition. On the other hand, it is possible that he was depicted there already during the reign of his father, king Uroš I.[5] In any case, these portraits of Dragutin prepared the way for the appearance of the solemn frontal representations of king Milutin, the supreme sovereign of the state. In that guise and with that meaning, Milutin was portrayed for the first time in Djurdjevi Stupovi.

The space Dragutin adapted for liturgical services, better known as Dragutin's chapel, is almost entirely covered with representations of personages and events from Serbian history. In the lowest register of frescoes we see the ktetor's ancestors on one side of Christ's throne and his own figure on the other, offering the model of his endowment to the heavenly king, with his son Vladislav and wife Katelina standing behind him. Beside them is the figure of king Milutin, the only figure with a frontal posture, and that of his wife with hands outstretched in prayer to Christ.[6] The central part of this scene, including Christ, Dragutin and his family, has all the elements of a typical ktetor's composition widely used in the Byzantine cultural sphere. It approaches the Byzantine model in both meaning – by offering his endowment to Christ the ktetor prays for his own salvation – and iconography: slightly inclined, Dragutin raises his left hand to his chest in a gesture of supplication while pointing to his endowment and addressing Christ. He is followed by his very next of kin, his son and wife. For the offering he receives, Christ responds by blessing the king. The line of the ktetor's ancestors approaching Christ in gestures of supplication, interceding on Dragutin's behalf, is also well known from older monuments. The novelty, however, is the appearance of king Milutin and his wife directly behind Dragutin's family. Not only does this element determine that the frescoes were painted after 1282, it also reflects the political situation in the Serbian state following the agreement of Deževo. The frontal, rep resentative stance of king Milutin, with a crown on his head and a staff and akakia in his hands, presents him as the supreme ruler. On the other hand, although rendered as the ktetor, Dragutin clearly displays the signs of his position which sprang from the agreement reached between the two brothers. The title which appears in the inscription accompanying the figure of Dragutin, dressed in regal robes, a loros and a divetesion, and wearing a crown with strings of prependoulia hanging from both sides – an exact likeness of Milutin's crown, repeats that written out by the figure of his brother, at that time already a ruler with absolute supremacy. Dragutin is marked as "Stefan' kral' s(i)n' s(ve)t(a)go i velikago kralja Uroša" (Stefan the King, son of the Holy and Great King Uroš) and in addition as "i htitor s(ve)tago hrama sego" (and ktetor of this holy church). A similar inscription once stood by the figure of king Milutin "Stefan' Uroš' kral' i s(i)n' s(ve)tago velikago kralja Uroša" (Stefan Uroš the King and son of the Holy Great King







8
Djurdjevi Stupovi, Dragutin's chapel,
Frescoes on the south wall, 1283–1285

9
Djurdjevi Stupovi, Dragutin's chapel, *King Dragutin*
in the scene of handing over the throne to Milutin, 1283–1285

10
Djurdjevi Stupovi, Dragutin's chapel, *King Milutin*
in the scene of handing over the throne to Milutin, 1283–1285

Uroš).[7] The symphony of joint reign of the two brothers, established in 1282 in Deževo, is expressed in full measure on this fresco from Djurdjevi Stupovi. At the same time, Milutin's supremacy is clearly underlined not only by the fact that his image appears in one of his brother's endowments but also by the representative character of this portrait, seen already on representations of Byzantine emperors as well as on those of Dragutin from the period of his independent rule. The influence of the other item of the Deževo agreement – that concerning the transfer of power only to Milutin personally, with an obligation on his part to acknowledge Dragutin's sons as heirs of the Serbian throne – is revealed not as much by the fact that Dragutin is accompanied by Vladislav,

the one designated to inherit the royal title and supreme power after his uncle's death, as by the fact that Milutin's son Stefan, who must certainly have been born by that time, is missing from the picture.[8]

The wives of the two kings are painted in almost the exact same manner: their heads bent and arms raised towards Christ, both wrapped in simply decorated cloaks and wearing low crowns and both bearing the title of queen. Originally they were accompanied by inscriptions, now vanished, which read: "Katelina kraljica d'šti velikago kralja ugarskago Stefana" (Katelina the Queen and daughter of the Great Hungarian King Stephen) and "Jelena kraljica srb's-ka" (Jelena the Serbian Queen). Dragutin's wife Katelina, most probably portrayed also in Gradac and certainly in Arilje, is a well known personage and the above cited data is considered reliable. However, the portrait of Milutin's wife from Djurdjevi Stupovi seems to have been the cause of a considerable number of scholarly arguments. At first this figure was identified as Milutin's second wife, the daughter of the sebastokrator of Thessaly, John Angelos (she was married to the Serbian king from the close of 1282 to the end of 1283). Hence, it was concluded that the frescoes of Dragutin's chapel must date from 1282–1283. In the meantime, it turned out that this lady by the name of Jelena was married to William de la Roche and the possibility of the existence of her portrait in Dragutin's chapel was thus discarded. The same reason induced some scholars to regard this figure as a portrait of Milutin's first wife (married to him perhaps until 1282) whose name is not confirmed in the sources.[9] Her identification as Milutin's third wife, Jelisaveta (married to the king from the end of 1283 until mid 1284), and even his fourth spouse, Ana (in matrimony with Milutin certainly from August 11th, 1284 until 1299), was also rejected[10] and all because of the confidence put into an old deciphering of the inscription which once stood by the queen. In fact, after the rejection of her identification as Jelena, the princess of Thessaly, only the *terminus post quem* remains beyond doubt – namely the year of the Deževo agreement (1282) – while the ultimate chronological limit for the creation of this fresco could be stretched to 1285, the approximate date of birth of Dragutin's second son, Urošic.[11] Justified misgivings concerning this quite old reading of the inscription by the Serbian queen[12] introduce the possibility of identification of Milutin's wife as Jelisaveta, a Hungarian princess and Dragutin's sister-in-law, whose marriage to Milutin was very brief (1283–1284), or even the Bulgarian princess Ana Terter whom he married in 1284. It is possible and more probable that only the first letters of Jelisaveta's name were once visible ("Jel...") and that they were consequently completed with and interpreted as those reading Jelena. On the other hand, it is also possible that the name of queen Ana was written out in an unusual manner, like that of St. Anne close to the apse ("Ajana"), which lead the scholars on to read it as Jelena ("Jelena").[13] In any case, this portrait does not represent Milutin's Thessalian wife. It is either Jelisaveta or Ana and the entire fresco decoration should accor-dingly be dated to 1283–1285, somewhat later than what is currently accepted.

The ktetor's composition in Dragutin's chapel owes its form to the traditional appearance of such representations in Serbian art – mostly in the choice of characters and their relation to Christ on the throne, although with an additional portrait of the supreme sovereign, and not as much in their distribution. The single, continuous line of ancestors ending with the figure of the ktetor bearing a model of his church, seen already in Mileševa, Radoslav's narthex in Studenica, Sopoćani, Gradac and perhaps even Petrova crkva, is divided into two groups gathered around Christ. On one side we have the ktetor's ancestors mediating before Christ while on the other stand the singled out figures of the ktetor himself and his family. In the presence of the sovereign king, he is the one who offers his endowment to Christ. The advance towards models set by Byzantine ktetors' compositions goes a step further in the church of St. Achilleios in Arilje (1295/1296), the second in line of Milutin's endowments raised after the change on the Serbian throne and dating from period of observance of the decisions made in Deževo. In essence, the ktetors' composition in Arilje emulates the type formulated in Dragutin's chapel at Djurdjevi Stupovi with the introduction of some significant changes: the group of ancestors-mediators is entirely detached from the ktetor and transferred from the narthex to the naos of the church, the ktetor's children are also singled out into a separate group and his relation to Christ is fundamentally changed. For the first time in Serbian art the act of donating a church to Christ is joined to the representation of heavenly investiture which entirely altered the composition of this painting. Instead of being shown while piously approaching Christ to receive his blessing for his good deed, the ktetor is rendered in a representative posture, facing the beholder and carrying the model of his church in his

hands. Only his wife still has her hands outstretched in prayer. On this painting Dragutin is also accompanied by Milutin portrayed in a stance already seen in Djurdjevi Stupovi. More than the one from the older church, this double portrait reflects the situation established by the agreement of Deževo. Both figures are signed as kings although with a significant distinction – Dragutin is "Stefan' kral' i prvi ktitor" (Stefan the King and first ktetor) and Milutin "Stefan' kral' vse srp'skie zemle i pomor'skije Uroš" (Stefan the King of all Serbian land and the Littoral Uroš). They are both dressed in the same robes, a dark scarlet divetesion and a loros studded with pearls and precious stones, and wearing spherical crowns with prominent orphanos. They both stand on red pillows but only Milutin bears in his hands royal insignia – a large cross-shaped staff and a red akakia.[14] Their joint reign and Milutin's primacy in hierarchy – as attested by the appearance of his portrait in Dragutin's endowment, his insignia and title – are confirmed by the blessing Christ gives to the both of them from a segment of the heavens above the two figures. There is no doubt that the emphasis placed on this relation between them opened the way for the creation of a specific ktetor's composition, modelled after Byzantine examples, which shows Christ accepting Dragutin's offering while giving his blessing to both Dragutin, Milutin and their joint reign and clearly indicates the extent of power of each ruler.[15] This representation justifies the long present theory that in the period following 1282 Milutin was regarded as the true ruler of all Serbian lands, i.e. also of those parts governed by Dragutin – even Arilje, the see of the bishops of Moravica, may have been subjected to his rule.[16]

Although the royal portraits in both Dragutin's chapel and Arilje reflect the situation brought about by the Deževo agreement and the nature of royal government in Serbia, it is curious that in Arilje Milutin is portrayed without his wife by his side. Although the presence of the queen was by no means prerequisite in proclaiming the mentioned ideological views, in Byzantium and other states which belonged to the sphere of its cultural influence it was quite common in compositions of this type. In order to understand better the differences in this matter between Djurdjevi Stupovi and Arilje, we shall reiterate the hypothesis which seems probable. It is well known that from 1284 king Milutin was married to the Bulgarian princess Ana, daughter of tsar George Terter. Because practically all the king's marriages were inspired and conditioned by guidelines of his foreign policy and even the internal affairs of his state, it seems that the separation from Ana, although not quite a formal divorce, could have taken place already in 1292 when George Terter lost the Bulgarian throne.[17] Queen Ana lived in Serbia until 1299 but was no longer considered to be Milutin's wife (a message which may have been indicated also by the Arilje fresco). Already in 1298 negotiations were in progress concerning the marriage of Milutin and Eudocia, sister of emperor Andronikos II, and, subsequently, the emperor's daughter, Simonida. This seems to be the most plausible reason for her absence from the painting in Arilje, all the more so since her image was in no way significant in showing the relations between the two kings, Dragutin and Milutin.

From the time of the Deževo agreement and until Milutin's marriage to Simonida (1282–1299) these relations were untarnished and filled with cooperation between the two brothers. Sources indicate that their mother played a considerable role in sustaining such conditions. It is well known that, together with her sons, Jelena restored the church of St. Sergius and Bacchus on the Bojana in 1290, as attested by the lengthy inscription carved by the entrance. A similar inscription also existed on a now lost icon of St. Nicholas which Jelena and her sons donated to the shrine of this saint in Bari. According to a XVII century testimony by Antonio Beatillo, the icon showed the figure of king Milutin on the right hand side (*Rex Urosius filius Urosii Regis Serviae*), Dragutin on the left (*Rex Stefanus filius Urosii Regis Serviae*) and also that of queen Jelena. Beside the name of her husband, king Uroš, the accompanying inscription also mentioned her sons, first Milutin and then Dragutin. The icon was painted on wood and its dimensions were small, most probably it resembled the one preserved in the Vatican treasury.[18]

The Vatican icon shows Christ in the top segment and beneath him the busts of the apostles Peter and Paul in the act of benediction. At the very bottom, underneath a decorated arch resting on columns and against a green background, we see the figure of queen Jelena as a nun, dressed in a dark red and blue robe. With hands outstretched, she bows before a Catholic saint. On either side we see the figures of kings Milutin and Dragutin wearing spherical crowns, dark red divetesion, richly decorated loros and scarlet shoes, with hands slightly uplifted towards Christ who gives his blessing. Of very interesting content, a votive gift to the apostolic church, decorated with



11
Vatican, Pinacothek, *Icon of Sts. Peter and Paul with portraits of kings Milutin and Dragutin and their mother Jelena*, end of the XIII century

images of the donors in prayer, the iconography of this icon emulates the solution of numerous examples found in Byzantine art on which Christ blesses pairs of saints or laymen. The disposition of the saints and the donors (with the figure of Jelena receiving the blessing of an unidentified singled out, saint) shows the apostles Peter and Paul as the mediators between Christ and the ktetors. It seems that there were never any inscriptions by the figures of the two Serbian kings but, like the words of the inscription on the Bari icon, the similarity in their stance and dress was certainly intended to show the equality of Jelena'sons. Jelena's humility as a modest nun before the unknown saint, the supplication of both her identically dressed sons addressed to the apostles Peter and Paul, and through them to Christ, as well as the blessing they receive from him, all impart an almost too ideal picture of brotherly love and an unwavering trust in Christ who, in the words of Jelena, makes her two sons "strong, powerful and sovereign kings in their fatherland, in Serbian lands".[19] Such a perfect picture persevered for quite some time, for almost twenty years, and left its stamp on literature, epigraphy and painting. But it could not be kept alive, neither by Jelena's efforts nor by Dragutin's open war against his brother. Having become a kinsman of the imperial family of Constantinople, in 1299 king Milutin set the future of Serbian history on a new course of which Deževo and its decisions were no longer a part.

Representations of Ancestors – Mediators and Advocates

In Serbian mural painting of the XIII century we come across a phenomenon which is almost unique in the Byzantine cultural and artistic sphere: almost as a rule, Serbian rulers are depicted with their parents and other ancestors as their mediators in the pious deed of donating endowments to Christ. In all truth, such scenes can sometimes be seen in Byzantium and the neighbouring countries,[20] but in Serbia they appear as a result of planned efforts to create and promote the cult of the holy dynasty and its most prominent members. The ideological overtones of this scene should by no means be overlooked either. In emphasising the holiness of dynasty members and selecting among them its intercessors before God, beginning with Stefan Nemanja, the monk Symeon, and ending with the figure of the ruler currently on the throne, there was a striking omission of those who were not directly descended from the progenitor, even if they had once ruled as sovereign kings. In a state in which forceful changes on the throne, all within the same family, were almost a rule, the inclusion of ancestors in royal ideology was indeed understandable, from the moment power was seized, through the period of its strengthening to the raising of the question of succession. By summoning hallowed ancestors the order of succession of the throne was justified and usurpers thus given legitimacy as an expression of God's will. The gradual elaboration of the dual meaning of the line of Nemanjids standing between the ktetor (who is also the ruler) and Christ – supplicatory as well as ideological in nature – can be observed in all the preserved monuments: the narthex of Mileševa (1222–1228), the south parekklesion of Radoslav's narthex in Studenica (1233–1235), the naos of Sopoćani (perhaps after 1276) and Gradac (around 1275).[21] Similar meanings are present also in representations of Byzantine emperors and their ancestors, encountered in Byzantium and some other Orthodox states, which, although poorly preserved, are well known from the sources.[22]

In Serbia, the theme of mediation is explicitly asserted for the first time in Sopoćani, at an as yet undetermined date, in the ktetor's composition painted in the south-west corner of the nave. The Virgin leads Uroš I and his sons to an enthroned Christ. Interceding on the king's behalf are his ancestors, the monks St. Symeon Nemanja and Simon (Stefan Prvovenčani), who no longer bear any signs of royal power which they once displayed in Radoslav's narthex in Studenica. In Gradac, the ktetors, queen Jelena and her husband Uroš I, are also introduced to Christ by the Virgin and St. Symeon Nemanja.[23] For the last time the line of ancestors appears in this guise in Petrova crkva in Ras, around 1282, on the third layer of frescoes in this cathedral church. At that time the south conch received a ktetor's composition in which the Virgin leads an unidentified monk with arms stretched out in prayer, probably St. Symeon Nemanja, to Christ the Merciful holding an open gospel book displaying the text of the eschatologically coloured verses concerning the Light of the World (John 8, 12). This monk must certainly have played the role of mediator on behalf of one of his descendants, either Dragutin or Milutin, whose image once occupied the spot which is now damaged.[24] Compared to similar scenes of an earlier date, the novelty of this composition lies in the fact that the interceding monk stretches both his hands out towards the Virgin in a stance which was to become paradigmatic at the close of the XIII century.

In Dragutin's chapel at Djurdjevi Stupovi the theme of intercession is replaced with representations of ancestral mediators. They are detached from the ktetor and his family and approach Christ's throne from the other side. The Virgin no longer stands between them and Christ since the ktetor is excluded form this group and her mediation is no longer necessary. All the ktetor's immediate ancestors are now his intercessors before Christ: the progenitor of the dynasty, St. Symeon Nemanja, Stefan Prvovenčani as monk Simon, Uroš I also as monk Symeon and finally his mother, Jelena. Except for this queen whose regal robes are replaced here with a modest attire and a white head scarf, a sign of her widowhood, all the others are depicted as monks turning towards Christ in gestures of supplication. Apart from the carefully planned choice of personages, the only sign indicating their connection to the idea of succession are their royal names and titles which appear side by side their monastic names in the accompanying inscriptions: Nemanja is "G(ospodi)n v'seh' sr'b'skih zeml'"(lord of all Serbian lands) and Prvovenčani "Stefan' Pr'vovenčani kral' sr'b'ski" (Stefan the First-Crowned Serbian King), Uroš I "Stefan' kral' Uroš" (Stefan King Uroš), and Jelena "Velika kralica" (the Great Queen). It is difficult to say whether it was king Dragutin's idea to have these Nemanjid monks painted and designated in such a manner. Their appearance could be interpreted as an honoured tradition and a sign of the times immediately preceding the agreement of Deževo. The well known part played by Nemanjid intercessors before Christ seems to be doubly stressed in Jelena's address to her sons on the question of brotherly love: "Your forefathers brought before the Lord their good deeds and feats while holding this earthly kingdom and living in it in a godly way... and by so doing they won the Lord's mercy... and their prayers which the Lord has acknowledged fortify your houses."[25]

Some ten years later, in Arilje, this group of mediators is even more detached from the ktetor's composition because it is transferred to the south wall of the west bay of the naos. Here also the row of figures includes Prvovenčani, Uroš I and Jelena, all shown in monastic habits and turning towards Christ with their hands raised in prayer. They also bear both their monastic and secular names as well as their royal titles. Incidentally, only that pertaining to Jelena is complete ("Jelena kralica v'se sr'p'skie zemle" – Jelena the Queen of all Serbian land) because in 1296 she was the only living person in this group. However, although still a part of this group St. Symeon Nemanja is singled out and depicted on the north wall. Like the two monks, his descendants, and Jelena, he, too, is facing Christ. Nemanja's role as mediator is further stressed by the scroll in his hands, inscribed for the first time here with the words of Psalm 34, 11 which lecture on the Fear of the Lord.[26]

The custom of painting Nemanjid mediators and advocates before God continued for a certain period of time, devoid of influences of royal ideology and considerably altered in appearance, as attested only by the partly preserved fresco in the west bay of the church of the Holy Apostles in Peć. Sometime around the year 1300, the south wall of this space was decorated with a row of figures of monks from the Nemanjid family. Only those of Stefan Prvovenčani and Uroš I remain from the original layer of frescoes, both still with their monastic and lay names and royal titles. They are represented as frontally postured megaloschimnoi holding unrolled scrolls, the right hand of each figure in a gesture of benediction, which makes them quite similar to the other figures of holy monks painted on church walls at that time. Today, their intercessory role is incomplete and difficult to understand because the frescoes adjoining them display a new choice of figures painted over the original layer of wall paintings in the XVII century. We can only discern that here, too, the figure of St. Symeon Nemanja, repainted in its original location in 1613–1614, headed the line of Serbian holy monks. The fact that Stefan Prvovenčani (Simon) and Uroš I (Symeon) are rendered in a manner characteristic of the XIII century, although in a greatly changed iconography and without epithets of holiness, indicates that the portrait of the ktetor, descendant of theirs, must once have stood in their vicinity. By that date, and judging by earlier examples of similar representations of Nemanjid monks, this could only have been king Milutin.[27]

After 1300, rows of personages from the Nemanjid family, iconographically interesting and rich in meaning, were no longer painted. The new circumstances called for a different approach in presenting the ruler's ancestors. The idea of intercession and mediation was replaced with representative portraits better suited to express the claims to the throne and its succession. Although in his charters king Milutin continues to evoke his ancestors, listing all or just some of them, from the progenitor of the dynasty on,[28] on the frescoes of this period the role of mediator is assigned only to St. Symeon Nemanja and St. Sava and, what's



12
Arilje, *Procession of Nemanjid monks*, 1295/1296



13
Chilandar, Katholikon, naos, *St. Symeon Nemanja*, 1320–1321



14
Chilandar, Katholikon, naos, *King Milutin*, 1320–1321

more, only in Studenica and Chilandar, the two centres of their cults. The fact that these two figures still retain the idea of mediation is demonstrated by their proximity to the portraits king Milutin on whose behalf they are interceding before Christ. In Kraljeva crkva of Studenica (around 1319) they were depicted on the north wall, directly facing the figure of king Milutin shown offering a model of his endowment to Christ through the intercession of the two patron saints of this church, St. Joachim and Anne. St. Sava, the full title of archbishop accompanying his image, is shown in his episcopal robes and with a gospel book in his left hand. His right hand is raised to his chest in a gesture of supplication. St. Symeon Nemanja wrapped in a monastic cloak stretches both his hands towards the infant Christ in the Virgin's arms. The Lord answers their prayers and supplications on behalf of their descendant with a gesture of benediction.[29] Another fresco on which these two Serbian saints intercede on behalf of king Milutin was painted in 1320–1321 in Chilandar, by the original tomb of St. Symeon Nemanja located in the south-west corner of the katholikon. St. Symeon – ὁ ἅγιος Συμεὼν, St. Sava – ὁ ἅγιος Σάβας κ[αὶ] κτήτορ – as well as king Milutin himself – Στέφανο[ς] ἐν Χ(ριστ)ῷ πιστός Οὔρεσις κ[αὶ κτήτορ], all hold their hands up in prayer. The king is followed by St. Stephen the Protomartyr who gives him his blessings. The gesture of mediating intercession is also assumed by the figure of St. Nicodemus, painted above the south entrance, to its west, probably the namesake and advocate before God of the former hegoumenos of Chilandar and acting archbishop of Serbia.[30] King Milutin is shown here as the new ktetor of Chilandar who carries on the feat of the first ktetors, his ancestors, who, rather like the XIII century prototypes, intercede on his behalf before Christ. All this corresponds to king Milutin's trust in the mediation of these holy men, praying before Christ,[31] evoked in his charters.

Portraits of Ancestors and Sons in the Service of Succession of the Throne

Serbian royal ideology upholds an exceptionally pronounced trust in the esteem of family ancestors whose cults were devoutly fostered. In order to justify the common and often forceful changes on the Serbian throne, charters and literary texts as well as works of art are all equally filled with evocations of royal forefathers from the direct line of ancestry. Apart from the basic idea of mediation, ktetors' compositions with portraits of former rulers and representations of the assemblies they held as the supreme protectors of the faith clearly convey the origin and nature of royal power. At the close of the XIII century, lines of ancestors accompanying the ktetors, depicted in postures of pious modesty, mostly had the function of mediation before Christ. However, scenes with far stronger political overtones appeared beside them. They in turn presented images of ancestors as well as descendants promoted as heirs to the throne and their iconography was most often based on similar scenes in Byzantine art.

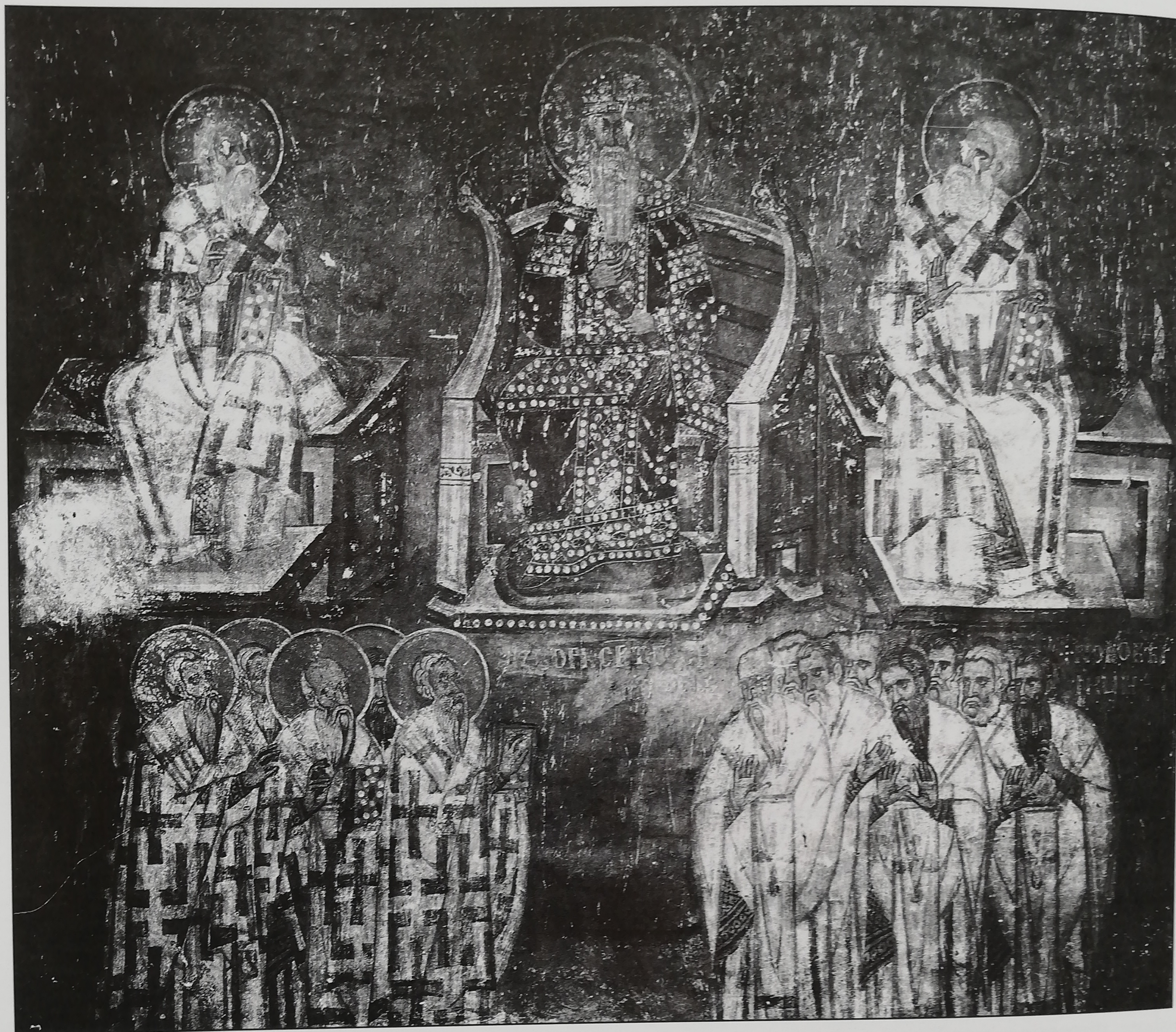
The decisions made at Deževo in 1282, probably bolstered by their ratification at the assembly held at that time, of which we have no direct testimonies in the written sources, created a situation previously unknown in Serbian history. A sort of joint reign was established which granted primacy to Milutin while obliging him to pass the throne on to Dragutin's sons after his death. Circumstances called for constant confirmation and reiteration of this agreement. Royal portraits were not exempt of an imprint of current events. Probably the first ensemble painted after Deževo, that in Dragutin's chapel at Djurdjevi Stupovi (1283–1285), reflected the change which took place in 1282 most clearly. The vault of this small church, an uncommon location unless this former gate house is regarded as an entrance in general,[32] is decorated with scenes of four state and church councils focused on the subject of royal succession and investiture of a new ruler. Although some of the councils are reliably documented in the sources, the painted scenes do not always adhere to the well known facts. Hence the representations on the vault of Dragutin's chapel are not of an illustrative nature but rather ideological in essence. The scenes from Serbian history we find here begin with the assembly summoned by Symeon Nemanja in 1196 when this ruler turned the throne over to his son Stefan. Although badly damaged, the following two scenes undoubtedly represent the investitures of Uroš I and king Dragutin. Their forceful takeovers, in one case from an enthroned brother and in the other from a father, rule out the possibility that these compositions could have been based on the iconography of succession which is the underlying matrix of the first scene. Finally, in the last scene of this sequence we see Dragutin turning over the throne to his brother Milutin. Both kings have youthful countenances although – modelled after the composition of Nemanja's abdication in favour of his son –

the new ruler assumes a central position, bearing an akakia in his right and raising his left hand to his chest. Dragutin, akakia in his right hand, points to the new king with his left hand.[33] Each investiture takes place in the presence of bishops who also point in the direction of the ruler, confirming the fact that the act of enthronement is also a sacral act. This indicates that the new ruler is the keeper of God's law and the protector of the Orthodox faith in the state. Crowned according to the Orthodox rite, he has become God's anointed one on earth. Shortly after, this idea was to begin to be rendered in a far more explicit manner in Serbian art – in the form of scenes of heavenly investiture.

The representations of state councils in Dragutin's chapel thus proclaim the order of succession of power in Serbia and the justification of these changes secured through the approval of the church. In this particular case the investitures of Radoslav and Vladislav, the two uncles of Dragutin and Milutin, were excluded because they could have toppled the legitimacy of Uroš's inheritance of the throne from Vladislav and thus also made the succession of Uroš's sons questionable. The other message conveyed by the councils depicted at Djurdjevi Stupovi – namely the fact that Serbian kings rule according to Orthodox canons and that they are the protectors of the faith and guardians of purity of its sacraments – could have been modelled after a fresco ensemble found in the narthex of Sopoćani (1263–1268). On the east wall we find a Serbian state council painted beneath a number of scenes of Ecumenical Councils and right above the portraits of king Uroš and his son Dragutin approaching the Virgin. This historical scene from Sopoćani shows king Stefan Prvovenčani on the throne, bishops dispensing benediction and below them two groups of church dignitaries in dispute. The element of significance in this composition is the figure of Symeon Nemanja, depicted to the right of Prvovenčani in the act of handing over to his son the akakia as a symbol of power and keeping of God's laws. This fresco from Sopoćani has at least two semiotic levels. It shows Nemanja handing over to his son Stefan the throne later to be inherited by Uroš and thereafter by his son, Dragutin, both of whom are portrayed right beneath this council. This scene also points out that Prvovenčani and the entire dynasty, from Nemanja to Uroš, rules according to Christian laws, defends the dogmas adopted at the Ecumenical Councils and sees to the purity of the Orthodox faith.

The same message is also conveyed through a scene showing the council of Nemanja painted in Arilje in 1296. Emulating the compositional scheme of the Ecumenical Councils surrounding it, this Serbian council stands directly opposite the ktetor's composition showing kings Milutin and Dragutin and presents Stefan Nemanja as a ruler (marked in an uncommon manner as "S(ve)ti Nemani Simeon' kral'" – St. Nemanja Symeon the King, while the entire composition is designated as "Zbor' sv(e)tago Simeona" – Council of St. Symeon) surrounded by bishops. Nemanja appears here as a role-model of the reigning kings and an exemplary champion of Orthodoxy. Unlike the scene in Sopoćani or the compositions in Dragutin's chapel, this Arilje fresco is not imbued with the idea of succession of power. It only indicates the progenitor of the Serbian ruling dynasty as the protector and teacher of the Orthodox faith whose mission is perpetuated by kings Milutin and Dragutin.[34] The location of these scenes in the narthex, adjacent to representations of Ecumenical Councils, could be associated with services of the first week of Lent, Orthodoxy Week, which are generally known to have made a considerable impact on fresco ensembles found in nartheces of Byzantine churches and created between the XII and the XIV centuries. This particular week, namely, commemorates the establishment of the cult of icons at the VIII Ecumenical Council held in 843 as well as other Orthodox dogmas considered to enjoy the protection of Orthodox rulers. Hence, it is not at all strange that royal portraits showing sovereigns offering their endowments to Christ are most often found in this particular part of the church.[35]

Apart from such images of ancestors, models of holiness and succession of power from one dynasty member to the next, Serbian XIII century art also includes images of their sons, heirs to the throne, intended to confirm and secure the line of succession of supreme power in the future. The first example of such a composition is preserved in the narthex of Mileševa (1222–1228), showing Stefan Prvovenčani standing in front of his elder son and co-regent Radoslav and his younger son Vladislav, ktetor of the church, standing at the end of this line. We have already discussed the way king Uroš and his two sons are portrayed in the narthex of Sopoćani, right beneath the scene of the council presided over by Prvovenčani. Once the ktetor's composition in the naos received a new layer of painting, at a still uncertain time, two figures of princes standing at the end of the line were added to the traditional sequence of the Nemanjids. The age of king Milutin introduced



significant novelties in the field of princely portraiture. It seems that the decrees of Deževo favoured the exclusive portrayal of Dragutin's sons, depicted in a traditional manner while accompanying their father in his mission as a ktetor, while entirely disregarding the descendants of king Milutin. The badly damaged fresco of Dragutin's son Vladislav at Djurdjevi Stupovi offers no ground for conclusions regarding his dress and princely insignia. It is only certain that, apart from his father, he is the only figure taking part in the supplication addressed to Christ while his mother's hand rests on his upper arm in a gesture of protection. Such a family portrait is not a rare phenomenon in Byzantine art either – let us just mention the example which is chronologically closest to our fresco, the portraits of emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos and members of his family from Apollonia (1281–1282) – and a similar solution had already been formulated in the case of the portraits of king Uroš, queen Jelena and their sons in the narthex of Sopoćani.[36] In Arilje, some ten years after Djurdjevi Stupovi, Dragutin's sons were portrayed again: namely Vladislav and his brother Urošic who was born in the meantime. Although still in the narthex, on the west wall, they are no longer a part of the ktetor's composition. Both princes are depicted frontally, standing on red pillows and wearing long tunics with cuffs and red chlamidae on top. Modelled after By-



15
Arilje, *Council of St. Symeon Nemanja*, 1295/1296

16
Prizren, Bogorodica Ljeviška, *Sts. Sava, Symeon Nemanja, Stefan Prvovenčani and prince Stefan*, 1309–1313

zantine double portraits, they both raise their arms slightly towards Christ Emmanuel who blesses them from on high. Although such images could convey the idea of succession of power we must not be too hasty in concluding that here Dragutin's sons are represented as heirs to the throne. After all, the inscription only mentions them as sons of king Stefan (Dragutin).[37]

However, shortly after the completion of the frescoes in Arilje, historical events took a different course and annulled the decisions made in Deževo, namely the decrees which had already left their imprint on art. The great military successes of king Milutin in the south resulted in lengthy negotiations with the

Constantinopolitan court and opened possibilities which could free him from the binding oaths of Deževo concerning the succession of the Serbian throne. The forging of family ties with the imperial family (1299) gave him great prestige and an opportunity to resolve single-handed, on his own, all the questions of internal and foreign politics. We do not know today the exact nature of all the items discussed in the course of the negotiations nor all the decisions of the agreement reached between the Serbs and the Byzantines, but it seems that one of the key clauses concerned Milutin's status on the Serbian throne or, more precisely, the possibility of its inheritance by his sons, especially those from his marriage to Simonida.[38] It is well known that shortly after Milutin's wedding with Simonida open and long-lasting war broke out between the brothers (and went on until 1312), and it is by no means accidental that from then on Milutin used every opportunity to point out that he was the son-in-law of the "Great Greek emperor", just as his grandfather Stefan Prvovenčani did before him, even after he divorced the Byzantine princess Eudocia.[39] Ties with the imperial family were emphasised not only for reasons of personal prestige but also as a means of resolving the far more significant questions of legitimacy and succession of power. In any case, with the marriage between Milutin and the Byzantine princess in 1299, and the war which soon broke out between the two brothers, the Deževo agreement was annulled which encouraged Milutin to promote his sons as heirs to the throne. It is characteristic that the first portrait or even mention of his elder son Stefan in an official document appears only at the time of open hostilities between Dragutin and Milutin. Namely, in a charter issued to the monastery of the Virgin of Ratac (1306) the Serbian king addresses the Virgin "s' sinom moim' Stefanom" (with my son Stefan) while striving to procure legitimacy for him from the Catholic world and handing over to his independent administration the region of Zeta, previously under queen Jelena's control, so that in the eyes of some of the foreigners Stefan even appeared to be the king, being referred to with that title in a Venetian document dating from 1310/1311.[40]

At the same time (between 1309 and 1314) a portrait of Stefan appears in Bogorodica Ljeviška in Prizren, as a part of an interesting group of portraits representing king Milutin and his ancestors.[41] Following the model set by his predecessors, king Milutin stresses the legitimacy of his rule and his right to the Serbian throne by having his portrait painted next to those of his ancestors just as, in his charters, he had their names written out next to his own. In Ljeviška the well known messages of Serbian royal portraits – holiness of the dynasty, continuity of inheritance of the throne and the God-blessed line of its succession – are conveyed in a somewhat different iconographic mode. The choice of characters, their disposition and accompanying inscriptions are all of equal significance. Here we see only the figures of Milutin's immediate ancestors (his great grandfather Symeon Nemanja, grandfather Stefan Prvovenčani and father Uroš I whose image has been destroyed) and his son and heir flanked by the two archbishops from their family (Sava I and, probably, Sava II whose figure is not preserved except for the green pillow he was intended to stand on). This composition simultaneously emphasises the solid unity of both ecclesiastical and secular authorities in the Serbian state. St. Symeon Nemanja, painted on the west wall as a monk with arms raised in prayer, intercedes before Christ (shown right opposite this figure, above the entrance to the naos) to whom he introduces his descendants, as recorded in the inscription around his head: "St. Symeon leading to the Lord all ktetors of the Serbian land". St. Sava stands on his left and on his right Stefan Prvovenčani, right next to Stefan, Milutin's son. King Uroš I and king Milutin, blessed by Christ shown in half-figure, stood on the opposite wall. If the holiness of the dynasty is epitomised by Nemanja's monastic figure as well as by the title which precedes his name and indicates his sanctity, the unbroken line of royal rule is stressed by the insignia and dress of Stefan Prvovenčani (Uroš I was probably represented in the same way), the omission of their monastic names as well as by Uroš's title. On the frescoes of Dragutin's chapel and Arilje the situation was entirely different because there the figures of parents and grandparents appeared only in the guise of mediators. The legitimacy of power transfer from father to son, beginning with Symeon Nemanja and confirmed by Christ's benediction, is underlined also in the inscriptions accompanying the royal portraits: Prvovenčani is the son of Stefan Nemanja and father of king Uroš (I), Uroš is the grandson of St. Symeon Nemanja, son of Prvovenčani and father of king Uroš (Milutin), Stefan Uroš II Milutin is the great grandson of Symeon Nemanja, grandson of Prvovenčani and son of Uroš. The inscription by Stefan, his son, is only partly preserved ("Stefan... Uroša..."). Stefan's appearance (shown here wearing a princely tunic decorated with two-headed eagles, a

stemma on his head and a staff in his hands) and his location, right next to the first Serbian king and opposite his father, testify that he was included in the direct line of inheritance of the Serbian throne. It may have been planned for king Milutin to be represented as a ktetor in the narthex of Ljeviška but that idea finally assumed a secondary position: instead, he is represented in a solemn, frontal stance, no model of the church in his hands, and with all the symbols of sovereign power. His role as the ktetor is mentioned only in the closing words of the long inscription. It was obviously his intention to present himself as the sole king of Serbia whose rule is based on ancestral heritage rights and blessed by Christ while being transferable to his son. Moreover, as attested by the inscription, in achieving all this he relied on the esteem of the Byzantine emperor Andronikos II, his father-in-law.

A direct follow-up of such an image of the Nemanjid family, with all its inherent meanings, is found in Gračanica (1319–1321), Milutin's last church. Several significant events took place in the meantime – Stefan's rebellion and his relegation to Constantinople in the spring of 1314, Dragutin's death in 1316 and plans concerning the designation of one of Simonida's brothers as the heir to the Serbian throne (once it was established that she could not bear children). Should that have actually happened the political ideology of the state would have been greatly altered and the significance of Nemanjid ancestors diminished. It seems that certain effects of such plans are actually reflected in the concept of Milutin's portraits. However, as it is well known, events took a different turn.[42] During the last years of Milutin's reign all possibilities of dynastic changes on the Serbian throne were entirely relinquished. Stefan was in Constantinople and, upon his return, isolated in Budimlja, so that Milutin's younger son Konstantin[43] appeared as his father's only possible heir. The earliest precisely determined mention of him dates from 1319 when king Milutin endowed the cathedral of Bari with a silver altar on which Konstantin's name appears in an inscription. There are certain indications that during the last years of his father's life parts of Zeta and territories in the vicinity of Skadar, previously controlled by his older brother Stefan and earlier still by queen Jelena, were signed over to his administration. An enthroned image of *Dominus Rex Constantinus* with crown and sceptre from a preserved silver dinar minted in Skadar can, most probably, be identified as that of Milutin's son Konstantin.[44] Although he did not bear the title of young king, his image, insignia and location next to king Milutin in the Nemanjid family tree in Gračanica speak in favor of the hypothesis that around 1319–1320 the king had designated Konstantin as his heir.

In those years, answering the plea of Danilo, bishop of Hum, Milutin restored the church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim and had it decorated with frescoes. At that time, the original ktetor's composition, located in the lowest register of the west wall of the narthex and showing prince Miroslav and St. Peter, was repainted. The north-east corner was decorated with royal portraits of which only meagre fragments remain today.[45] The figure of the ruler was painted at the very end of the north wall and it seems that he was facing a younger person painted to his right. This figure is in an even worse state of preservation and displays a man turning towards the ruler. Next to him, on the east wall, there stood a figure of a queen. Only her open crown adorned with pearls and precious stones is to been seen today as well as a halo behind her head and, in the lower portions, a yellow divetesion with a red loros and pearls. Her feet rested on a red pillow.

In the years around 1320 these figures could only have been the images of king Milutin, queen Simonida and the young prince Konstantin. It is almost certain that the remains of the queen figure represent Simonida because she is regularly shown with such an open, jagged crown, divetesion, robe and red pillow (Nagoričino, Kraljeva crkva and Gračanica). Milutin's dress, however, is not typical of his portraits. It is more like the attire of Stefan Prvovenčani in Bogorodica Ljeviška and that of prince Miroslav in his ktetor's composition in the same church of Sts. Peter and Paul. In the Nemanjid family tree in Gračanica Konstantin is also shown wearing a tunic and cloak. Should our assumption concerning the identity of the figures depicted here prove to be correct, we must point out that the pair of images of Konstantin and king Milutin stand out as a special entity and that, for those reasons, the figure of Simonida was transferred to the east wall. The assumed stance of the young prince turning towards the king, and it is probable that Milutin was depicted in a frontal position, could indicate that the two were shown facing one another, in a manner which had originally been envisaged for the composition on the east wall of the narthex in Gračanica. Of course, all this remains in the domain of speculation because the actual state of preservation of the portraits offers no ground for decided conclusions.



The above mentioned composition from Gračanica (1319–1321) was accomplished only in the form of a drawing produced in ochre paint, visible enough beneath the coat of blue which immediately covered it.[46] The central part was occupied by two figures which can be identified as king Milutin and prince Konstantin. Flanking them were frontal figures of the king's parents in monastic habits, St. Jelena and St. Uroš (Symeon), with their secular names and royal titles, including a minor mistake in Uroš's case. Formally, this painting generally emulated the model of royal compositions of parents and children receiving their celestial benediction from Christ.[47] On the Gračanica fresco divine investiture was directed only to Milutin and Konstantin. Indirectly, through their

17
Gračanica, *Queen Jelena as a nun, prince Konstantin and king Milutin below Christ Emmanuel, Uroš I as a monk*, 1319–1321

presence and their titles, Uroš and Jelena also took part in it. Elements of such an iconography entered Serbian art precisely during the age of king Milutin. We have already seen that on the icon from Rome he and his brother are shown in supplicatory address while receiving blessings from Christ, in the same manner as Dragutin's sons were blessed in Arilje. The fact that in Gračanica Uroš and Jelena are shown in monastic habits while being identified by their secular names and titles which point out their royal authority, can be explained by the original concept of this composition which also included the portraits of king Milutin and his son Konstantin. Simultaneously, this painting represented their investiture and established the continuity of royal rule, from the first through the second up to the third generation of the same family. The same idea had already been conveyed in the narthex of Sopoćani (1263–1268) in one and in Dragutin's chapel (around 1283–1285) in another manner. A different iconographic model, although with the same meaning, was planned for Gračanica. The reason for the alteration of this fresco in the course of its painting remains unknown. Could it be, perhaps, that the Nemanjid family tree was devised as a solution better suited to represent the divine investiture of king Milutin and his heir and convey the order of inheritance of the Serbian throne and did that make the composition on the north part of the wall dispensable? Whatever the reasons, the original concept remains only in the form of drawing because its central part, with the figures of Milutin and Konstantin, was immediately covered with a layer of blue background paint while the crowns in Christ Emmanuel's hands – intended originally for the Serbian king and his son – were replaced with the monastic habits that he now hands to the holy nun and monk, Jelena and Uroš.

His rightful claims of the Serbian throne, the divine origin of his power and the contingency that his son was to inherit them – these ideas king Milutin displayed most clearly through the Nemanjid family tree, a composition which made its first appearance in Gračanica.[48] It is located on the east wall of the narthex, opposite a representation of Paradise painted as a part of the Last Judgement. From Stefan Nemanja, dressed in royal robes and placed at the bottom of the painting, there stems a stylised vine, branching out as it grows in height and enveloping a large number of figures of his descendants. Portraits of Nemanja's sons, St. Sava and Vukan, appear on either side of the progenitor and that of Stefan Prvovenčani directly above him. The First-Crowned king is, in turn, flanked by Stefan Radoslav, archbishop Sava II, Vladislav and Stefan, Vukan's son. King Uroš I is given a central position in the third row accompanied, on either side, by Dragutin, Prnjača, Milutin's sister, and Dragutin's sons Urošic and Vladislav. The top register is reserved for king Milutin surrounded by his son Konstantin and daughter Carica, with two insignia bearing angels hovering beside him while Christ blesses them all with both hands from on high.

In the sphere of royal ideology, the Nemanjid family tree from Gračanica earlier is based on representations of the Nemanjids painted in the narthex of the Prizren church, but in the domain of iconography it introduces a new image. Quite in harmony with the general taste of the Serbian milieu, it is based on Old Testament models as they appear in both their liturgical and hymnographical versions. In both Prizren and Gračanica, the family progenitor, Stefan Nemanja, is shown with his arms raised in a gesture of prayer and intercession while the central part of the painting is taken up by figures of representatives of direct royal lineage painted one above the other (Stefan Prvovenčani, Uroš I and king Milutin). As in Ljeviška, those are the only figures with halos – apart, of course, from Sava I and Sava II. Finally, they are all dressed in royal robes and bear the symbols of royal authority. Other family members were also introduced to this Nemanjid family tree but they are neither dressed in royal costumes (divetesion and loros) nor do they sport royal insignia (stemma, akakia and cross-shaped staff). Regardless of the fact that some of them – Radoslav, Vladislav and Dragutin – ruled the sovereign Serbian state at one point in history, they are not even signed as rulers. On the contrary, they all have the appearance of princes, dressed in tunics and cloaks, with ring-shaped crowns on their heads and rods in their hands. Even the accompanying inscriptions mention only their familial relations with king Milutin or his ancestors. For those reasons Dragutin had is signed only as "the brother of the King" (i.e. Milutin) and his sons, Vladislav and Urošic, as "sons of Stefan". Apparently, the Deževo agreement was long forgotten. It also seems that, as an outcome of the hostilities between the two brothers, Dragutin definitely lost his royal title. We can therefore say that the Nemanjid family tree in Gračanica does have ideological overtones because it is focused on glorifying king Milutin, stressing the legitimacy of his authority and demonstrating his son's right to

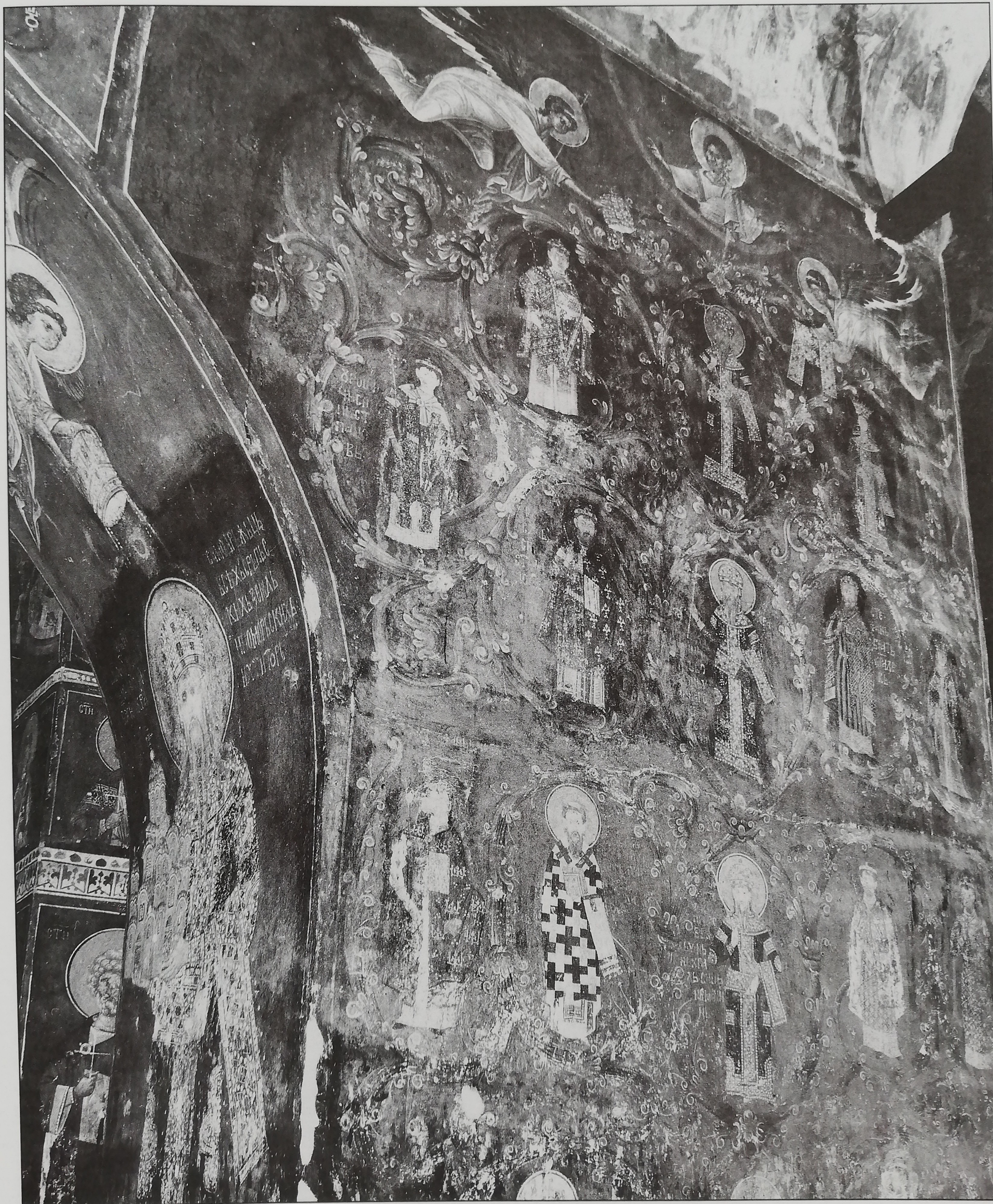
inherit the throne of his father. On the one hand, personages considered insignificant in confirming this line of succession were relegated to the lateral branches of this family tree while, on the other, Konstantin's portrait was mindfully positioned on his father's right-hand side, the place usually reserved for crown princes. Meanwhile, the portrait of the king's elder son, Stefan, still unforgiven for his attempt to overthrow his father, was left out of the painting all together. Apart from the new forms and personages it displays, the novel quality of the Nemanjid family tree in Gračanica lies mostly in the fact that its ideological content is more precisely defined than ever before: of all the Nemanjid family trees this is the only one showing Stefan Nemanja in royal robes and wearing a crown and presenting king Milutin as the one chosen by the Lord to be the heir of his forefathers not only through the blessings of Christ, which he had already been given on earlier portraits, but also through the divine nature of the insignia brought to him by angels from the heavens.

Finally, we must mention that this period also marks the appearance of images of Milutin's ancestors, St. Symeon and St. Sava, not as mediators or figures dependent on the figure of the ktetor but within a composition which was going to survive in its original form until the late Middle Ages. In the course of the previous century, images of Symeon Nemanja and Sava were painted either unrelated to each other or, in cases when they were painted together, within compositions suggesting mediation or intercession. Preparatory steps for their joint representation, as it appears in St. Nikita in its earliest preserved example (around 1320), go back to portraits of Sava and Nemanja found in places especially devoted to their cult – in Studenica and Chilandar. In both these instances, however, they are still deeply involved in interceding before Christ on Milutin's behalf, as attested by the position of their hands raised in prayer.[49] So far as we know, this function of St. Symeon and St. Sava in relation to the ktetor disappears, for the first time, on their portraits from the church of St. Nikita near Skoplje. They were painted side by side on the north wall, next to a line of other celebrated monks, Symeon Nemanja in his habit of megaloschimnos and with an unrolled scroll inscribed with the words of Psalm 33, 11 and St. Sava "Sava arhiep(i)s(ko)p' pr'vi srpski" (Sava the first Serbian archbishop) in his sakkos. Both figures are shown frontally and in the act of benediction.[50] It is by no means accidental that such a joint representation of theirs appeared for the first time in a metoch church of Chilandar because it was on Mount Athos, as shown also by the works of Domentijan and Teodosije, that their joint cult was nurtured with special devotion.

In the art of Milutin's age, there is only one portrait of St. Sava as a single figure, without his father or other Serbian archbishops, and it was painted in Gračanica between 1319 and 1321. He is shown wearing a sakkos, with a closed gospel in one hand and a decorated cross and handkerchief in the other, in a strict frontal stance, very much like the other saints painted in this zone. A simple inscription stands by his figure: "S(ve)ti Sava arhiepi(sko)p'" (St. Sava the archbishop). It is surely no accident that he was painted right next to Sts. Constantine and Helena because of the analogies to be drawn between the first Christian emperor and the first Serbian archbishop.[51]

Portraits of Milutin, the Sovereign King

From the moment he ascended the Serbian throne king Milutin was always portrayed in a representative stance, previously seen only on portraits of king Dragutin, with insignia and in dress of the Byzantine emperors, a fashion introduced to the Serbian royal costume by Uroš I, the father of the two kings. Apart from the icon from the Vatican, portraits of Milutin from the first phase of his rule are preserved only in churches raised by his brother. Therefore, they entail all sorts of connotations – legitimacy, order and harmony of power as agreed in Deževo – which certainly do not diminish his role as the sovereign but limit its historical importance. The changes which took place around the year 1300, marked by the break with Dragutin, the breach of the 1282 contract as well as the newly established ties with the court at Constantinople, also changed the way Milutin was portrayed. Between 1309 and 1313 a new image of the Serbian sovereign king emerged in Bogorodica Ljeviška while old notions of legitimacy and succession were expressed in a new iconographic language, closer to Byzantine understandings of the origin and nature of royal authority. King Milutin was painted against a solemn red background, in a rigid, representative stance and wearing true Byzantine imperial robes. The dark blue, almost black sakkos with a maniakis, peribrachia and cuffs, as well as the insignia – crown, sceptre and loros – are typical of the dress and symbols of power of Byzantine emperors of the



18
Gračanica, *Nemanjid Family Tree*, 1319–1321



19
Gračanica, *St. Sava the Serbian and the holy emperor Constantine*, 1319–1321

XIII and XIV centuries. Milutin's ideology and the place he holds within it are expressed equally successfully through both his pictorial representation and the accompanying inscription. He is the blessed king of holy lineage, great grandson of St. Symeon Nemanja, grandson of the First-Crowned king Stefan and son of the great king Uroš. He is surrounded by the figures of all these ancestors for not only was he an offspring of the hallowed root but also a legitimate heir of their power. He is the God devout king and is thus shown receiving his authority directly from Christ, with his blessings. Although this aspect of the portrait is similar to the way the king was portrayed in Arilje, in Ljeviška he no longer shares his authority with his brother but rather inherits it from his father. He is the sovereign king and, although he had already used this qualification in legal documents before, this is the first time he is portrayed and signed in this guise, as the legitimate heir of his father. Meanwhile, there is no sign of Dragutin or his sons on this painting. Finally, Milutin is the son-in-law of the great Greek emperor, Palaiologos kyr Andronikos, a fact which assures his rise as a sovereign and lies behind his identification with the Byzantine ruler on the pictorial plane. Even if it had originally been intended for king Milutin to be represented as a ktetor, only a note of that idea actually remains in the closing words of the inscription. What's more, his figure is a part of the solemn, ceremonial scene showing the bestowal and confirmation of his authority and sovereign position.[52]

This analysis of the inscription written out by the figure of king Milutin could indicate that in Prizren each of its elements received an adequate pictorial representation: the idea of sovereignty is expressed through Milutin's appearance and his insignia, the divine origin of his power through the blessings of Christ, his holy roots through the images of St. Symeon Nemanja and St. Sava, the legitimacy of his rule through the chosen genealogy the and position of his portrait to the right side of a figure of his father. The prominent place accorded in the inscription to his family ties with the Byzantine emperor is reason enough to assume that a portrait of queen Simonida once stood by his own, occupying the space where the fresco decoration is now damaged.

In accordance with the new spirit of royal portraits and ktetors' compositions, imbued with late Byzantine concepts of the nature of the ruler and the donor, in the church of St. George in Staro Nagoričino king Milutin and queen Simonida were painted (1315–1317) dressed in the representative robes of a Byzantine imperial couple. King Milutin still holds a model of the church and a scroll (akakia) in his left hand while gesturing towards St. George and Christ with his right. These portraits of king Milutin and queen Simonida from Nagoričino are almost literally identical with all their other portraits as a couple, especially those from Kraljeva crkva in Studenica, while the figure of Milutin, viewed separately, is even closer to his portrait from Bogorodica Ljeviška. The element which sets the Nagoričino portraits apart is the manner in which the accompanying inscriptions are written. In content they resemble those of Studenica, although here the king's name is written out in Greek and his title in Serbian: "ΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΣ ΟΥΡΕΣΙΣ v' H(rist)a B(og)a bl(a)goveren' kral' vseh' sr'psk'ih zem'l' i pomor'skjeh'" (Stefan Uroš in Christ God faithful King of all Serbian lands and the Littoral). Simonida is referred to as the most majestic queen and Komnene only in Greek: ΣΥΜΟΝΙΔΑ Η ΠΑΝΥΨΗΛΟΤΑΤΗ ΚΡΑΛΕΣΑ ΚΟΜΝΗΝΗ. The use of this language next to the images of the royal couple could be explained by a desire to respect the local tradition of the recently conquered regions (Nagoričino being located in one of them). However, one should not easily discard the assumption that it was Milutin's new policy toward Byzantium, with plans entailing an heir from Constantinople, which conditioned the use of the Greek language in writing out the names of the Serbian king and queen. It is also striking that none of his Nemanjid ancestors, and surely none of his sons, were painted by his side.[53]

Quite the contrary, on one side of queen Simonida and king Milutin we see the holy emperor Constantine and his mother Helena while the other is taken up by a figure of St. George handing over a sword to the king. Representations of rulers being invested with swords and other insignia, a part of symbolic divine investitures, are very common in medieval art. This scene from Nagoričino has an additional explanation found in one particular historical event: the victory of Milutin's troops over the Turks in Asia Minor in 1313, as indicated by the inscription carved into the lintel of the west portal of this church.[54] In order to understand this representation even better it is important to note that, beside him and his wife, this painting also includes the figures of St. Constantine and Helena. Namely, comparisons with Constantine the Great had a very specific role in the ideology of Byzantine emperors: the Byzantine emperor is always the heir of the first Christian emperor, he is the "new

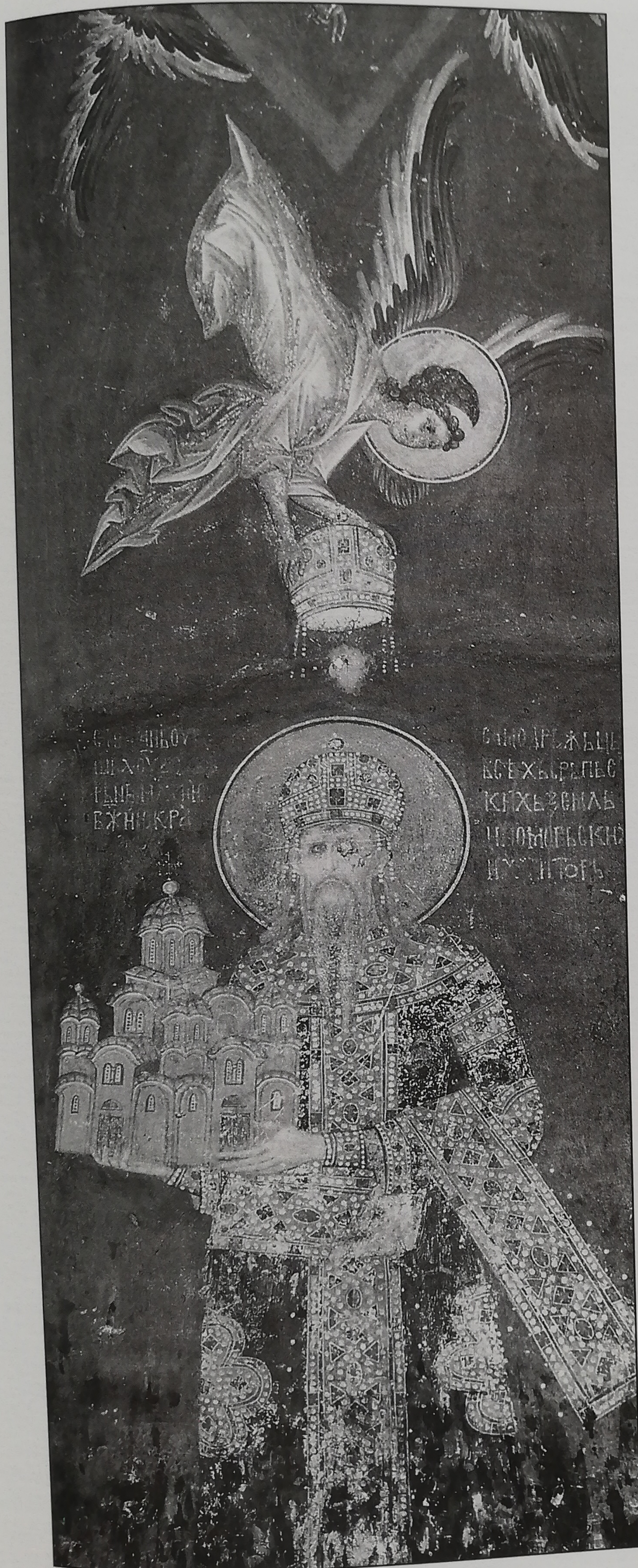
Constantine". It is obvious that king Milutin adopted this idea from Byzantine royal ideology. On this fresco it is he who is represented as an heir of emperor Constantine and defender of the faith: he is the perpetrator of the deeds of the first Christian emperor shown holding a cross by his side – a symbol of his role in the apostolic Christian mission. As a ktetor, Milutin is the one who strengthens and spreads the faith, as attested by a model of the church in his hands. On the other hand, as a king he is the one who also defends the faith in battle. The sword handed over to him by St. George confirms the divine nature of his victories, such as the one against the infidels in Asia Minor which took place in 1313. St. George is a mediator between God and the Serbian king, it was with his help that the battle was won and the church is accordingly dedicated to the memory of St. George Tropaiophoros.[55]

In a manner similar to the painting in Nagoričino, king Milutin and queen Simonida were also portrayed in a frontal stance in Kraljeva crkva in Studenica. The king holds a model of his endowment with both hands while offering it, at the same time, with a gesture of his left hand to the patrons, Sts. Joachim and Anne, who intercede on his behalf before Christ. The Lord, in turn, gives the king his blessings. Again, Milutin is represented in the posture and with all the symbols of a Byzantine emperor. The inscription beside him contains a title most often found in official documents: Stefan Uroš, by the grace of God king and sovereign of all Serbian lands and the littoral. Queen Simonida stands to the left of her husband bearing a staff in her hands. She is wearing a robe with wide sleeves, decorated with beautiful floral motifs, while her maniakis and loros are covered with precious stones, pearls and golden straps. Here, too, on her head we find an open, jagged crown, also decorated with pearls and precious stones, and large prependoulia with strings of pearls. Her face is similar to that painted in Nagoričino. According to Byzantine fashion of the day, seen in Serbian art for the first time on the portrait of Dragutin's wife Katelina in Arilje, her countenance is entirely idealised, a perfect oval shape without any shading or modelling. As in Nagoričino, apart from noting her name, the inscription stresses her Komnenian and Palaiologan lineage. King Milutin was obviously pleased to be related through marriage to these two famous Byzantine families.[56]

The ktetor's composition in Gračanica is the last in the line of representations stressing the divine cha-



20
Gračanica, *Queen Simonida*, 1319–1321



21
Gračanica, *King Milutin*, 1319–1321

racter of Milutin's authority and its legitimacy. It is rendered in a form which had never before been seen in Serbian art. This fresco is located in the passageway connecting the narthex and the naos, with king Milutin on the south and queen Simonida on the north side. From the soffit of the vault above them, Christ, in half-figure and surrounded by cherubim, sends them his blessings while two crown bearing angels descend from on high towards the royal couple.[57] The king is represented in a solemn, frontal position, wearing a black sakkos, a loros and a true Byzantine kamelaukion as insignia while Simonida sports a lavish dress and cloak, an open crown with large prependoulia on her head, and holds a staff in her left hand. Beside ktetor-related connotations – king Milutin holds a model of the church with both hands – this Gračanica fresco also includes the motif of the symbolic investiture of the ruler, well known in Byzantine art and certainly adopted from its heritage.[58] The image of Christ above Milutin, rendered in half-figure which actually reaches a little below the waist is enclosed in a rhomboid frame and surrounded by cherubim and could well be the image of Christ from the vision of Isaiah (Isaiah 6, 2–3), implying ideas of the throne of the Lord and of heaven. According to Byzantine views, best expressed by Constantine Porphyrogenitos, imperial insignia are of divine origin, they are heaven sent.[59] The painting from Gračanica proves that, in the age of king Milutin, the Serbian milieu had adopted those ideas in such a measure that even the iconography of Serbian royal portraits had become almost identical with that developed for centuries in Constantinople. The figure of Milutin is supplemented by his full title: he is Stefan Uroš, faithful to God and by the mercy of God sovereign King of all Serbian lands and the Littoral. The inscription by his wife no longer mentions her Komnenian roots, as it did in Nagoričino and Studenica, while placing greater emphasis on her relations with the Palaiologoi than the inscription from Studenica: Simonida is the queen Palaiologina, daughter of emperor Andronikos Palaiologos.

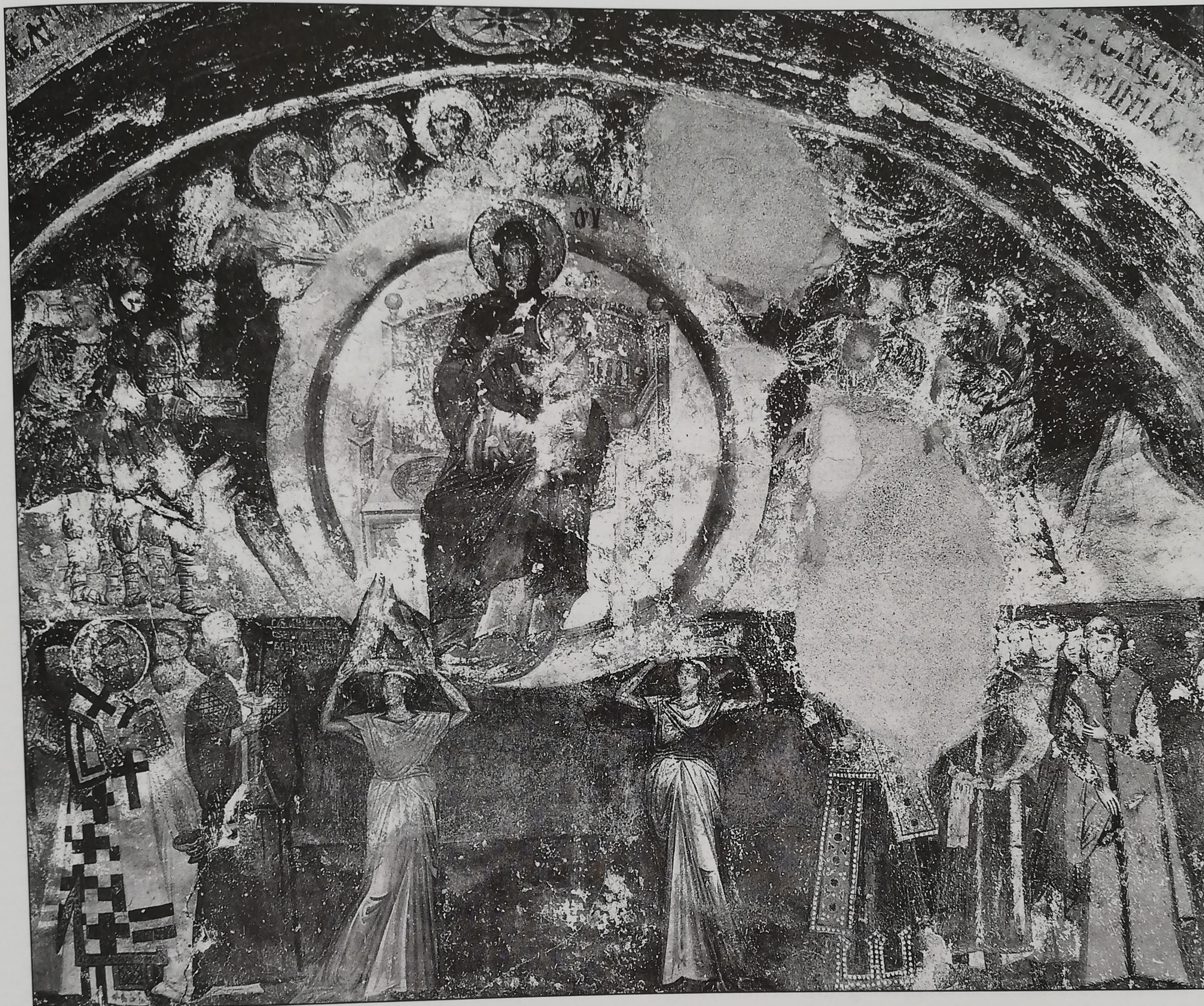
Gračanica and the frescoes painted at the same time in the katholikon of Chilandar (1320–1321) display the final form of the image of history as it was seen by king Milutin. It summarises his attempts of many years to secure his reign and render that in pictorial form, to convey its divine nature, its holy roots, the right of his son to inherit it and, finally, his own relations with the Byzantine emperor. In Gračanica emphasis is placed on local Nemanjid traditions while



in Chilandar the image of history is imbued with meanings of universal power as well as with intentions to point out the place of the Serbian king within its hierarchy. The recently cleaned and deciphered frescoes on the east wall of the narthex of Chilandar, displaying portraits of Byzantine and Serbian rulers,[60] are more direct than any other monument in displaying Milutin's relation to Chilandar and, more still, his royal ideology. The centre of the painted programme of the space above the entrance to the naos of Chilandar's katholikon is reserved for an enthroned figure of the Virgin, with Christ on her lap, being addressed in supplication by the first ktetors of

22
Chilandar, Katholikon, narthex, *Emperor Andronikos II, king Milutin and St. Stephen the Protomartyr,* 1320–1321

23
Žiča, *Christmas hymn,* 1309–1316



Chilandar, St. Symeon and St. Sava, painted on the front faces of the pilasters (all this still lies under a layer of painting dating from the XIX century). Their position and stance indicates that they are still playing the role of intercessors but at the some time underlines their importance in founding the Serbian monastic community on Mount Athos. Other personages who directly influenced the fate of Chilandar at the beginning of the XIV century are organised into two groups of figures painted on the east wall, to the left and right of the Virgin: those on the south side represent emperor Andronikos II and king Milutin accompanied by St. Stephen the Protomartyr, protector of the Serbian state and Milutin's personal guardian saint, and those on the north side the young coregent Andronikos III, Stefan Uroš III and probably his son Dušan (repainted in the XIX century), the last two figures painted at a somewhat later date. The dark red sakkos of king Milutin is almost identical to that of Andronikos II (although his is black), decorated with pearls and golden applications and with a yellow loros hanging over his left hand. Both rulers have identical kamelaukia on their heads and both stand on identical scarlet pillows embroidered with two-headed eagles. The Greek inscription beside Milutin presents him as Stefan in Christ God faithful

King Uroš, and most beloved son-in-law of the mighty and Holy Emperor Andronikos Palaiologos and ktetor of this holy monastery: ΣΤΕΦΑΝ ΕΝ Χ(ΡΙΣΤ)Ω ΤΩ Θ(Ε)Ω ΠΙΣΤΟΣ ΟΥΡΕΣΙΣ ΚΡΑΛΗΣ Κ(ΑΙ) ΠΕΡΙΠΟΘΗΤΟΣ ΓΑΜΒΡΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΡΑΤΕΟΥ Κ(ΑΙ) ΑΓΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΔΡΟΝΙΚΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΛΑΙΟΛΟΓ[ΟΥ] Κ[ΑΙ] ΚΤΗΤΩΡ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΜΟΝΗΣ ΤΑΥΤΗΣ. Being the ktetor, with a gesture of his left hand the king addresses the Byzantine emperor, and through him the Virgin with Christ, while Andronikos II appears in a motionless frontal stance, a large cross-shaped staff in his right hand. The element which connects the figures of the two rulers and, at the same time, indicates their hierarchical standing in relation to each other is the scroll of rolled up charters which they hold together so that king Milutin is shown offering them by holding them up and Andronikos accepting them by gripping them from the top. This particularity stresses the legal relations between a foreign ruler-ktetor (Milutin) and a sovereign ruler (Andronikos) on whose territory the monastery is located. Although emperor Andronikos issued independent charters to Chilandar, those confirming the gifts given to the monastery by of his son-in-law, the Serbian king, are much more numerous. That is why, on the fresco in question, only king Milutin is signed as ktetor and represented as the one patronisingly recommended by St. Stephen to Christ in the Virgin's arms. Judging by the layer of wall paintings from 1803, the surrounding scenes, and especially that of the Wisdom Hath Builded Her House (Proverbs 9, 1–18), were meant to exalt Milutin's renovation of the Chilandar katholikon as an act of Divine Wisdom, thus comparing the Serbian king to Solomon. Moreover, the extensive inscription under Milutin's figure, displaying a number of elements usually found in charters, celebrates in writing the ktetor and his deed, represented here in a pictorial form full of allusions and easily comprehensible messages.

The absence of the figure of Simonida by that of Milutin in Chilandar is not surprising because even representations of women saints were restricted in the Athonite milieu. Milutin was portrayed without Simonida only once more, in Žiča, in 1309–1316, within a composition of liturgical character. Figures of king Milutin (signed as Stefan king Uroš sovereign of all Serbian land and the littoral), in the company of his courtiers, dressed in a purple divetesion with a decorated loros and holding an akakia in his hand (the upper part of his figure is damaged), and archbishop Sava III (Sava the Right Reverend archbishop of all Serbian land and the littoral, as it says in the inscription beside him), wearing a polystaurion, sakkos and omophorion, with a gospel in one and a censer in the other hand, followed by what appears to be the hegoumenos of Žiča, monks, singers and a candlebearer, appear at the bottom of the representation of the Christmas hymn painted above the entrance to Žiča. Although this well known Christmas sticheron was often rendered in painting during the XIII and XIV centuries, as well as in later times, Žiča is the first church in which contemporary figures, such as the Serbian archbishop and king with his retinue, are shown taking part in the Christmas liturgy. Their presence within this scene is explained by the inscribed words of Anatolios's, sticheron sung at mattins. It celebrates Christ who is born in Bethlehem while heavenly powers and the earth with man rejoice; the wise men offer their gifts, the shepherds adore him and "we constantly cry: Glory to God on high and peace on Earth, good will among men". This verse of the sticheron indicates that the fresco shows the arrival of the Serbian king to the service and the archbishop greeting him. This could be seen as proof that the Constantinopolitan type of Christmas procession, which included the most prominent members of the Church and the Court, had become customary in Serbia. The Serbian milieu left its own imprint on representations of such ceremonies, in particular through the appearance of secular and ecclesiastical dignitaries, as attested by the Matejič fresco (around 1350) of the Christmas hymn which includes figures probably representing tsar Dušan and the current patriarch Joanikije.[61]

Repainting the Images of the First Ktetors

King Dragutin's extensive activities as a ktetor, and even more so those of king Milutin were also characterised by the fact that they were entirely focused on renovating old shrines – as we can learn from the charters they issued to the restored monasteries or the preserved paintings and the architectural and pictorial characteristics of the monuments.[62] Examples of renovation or enlargement of endowments raised by the ancestors of these two rulers are a point of special interest for this study. By the end of the XIII and the beginning of the XIV century Serbian art had already experienced more than a hundred years of continual activity in the field of architecture and painting when the new circumstances called for the renewal of the

old, already weathered edifices and the enlargement of those which no longer satisfied the changed requirements as well as for the construction of larger and more beautiful structures. Sometimes, in the course of these undertakings, images of previous ktetors would either be repainted, with or without the models of their endowments, or just mentioned in inscriptions. On the other hand, records of ktetors from the pre-Nemanjid era were preserved only in the charters issued by the new ktetors.

According to one interpretation, royal portraits painted close to the entrance, even in cases when the depicted personages lived in entirely different epochs, speak of joint ktetorship. This would explain the portraits of Stefan Prvovenčani and king Radoslav in Žiča (1309–1316) or those of king Uroš I and king Milutin in Bogorodica Ljeviška (1309–1313).[63] The frescoes in the entrance portico of the church in Žiča are strongly coloured with the idea of establishing the Church on Earth and it is, therefore, for a good reason that the portraits of the first ktetors of Žiča, king Stefan Prvovenčani and his son king Radoslav, are located close to the entrance while the charters they issued to the monastery are written out on the vault. Their images stand directly beneath the portraits of the new ktetors, king Milutin and archbishop Sava III, taking part in the liturgical celebration of Christmas. Only the inscription by the figure of king Radoslav survives today. However, despite the indisputable fact that the exonarthex was built during his time, this inscription does not mention the fact that he, too, was a ktetor. Despite of the existence of reliable written testimonies speaking of his undertakings as ktetor, the figure of Stefan Provenčani was, most probably, also left without this qualification. Nonetheless, their role as ktetors is indicated clearly enough in the founding charters written out in their vicinity. This definitely calls to mind Byzantine chrisobuls with portraits of donors and their projection on church walls in exactly the form observed in Žiča. It is possible that the portraits of these Serbian kings were originally located on this spot. Namely, both rulers are portrayed in a frontal stance, the gesticulation of their hands is not clear (they could either be addressing Christ and the Virgin of the Christmas hymn or pointing towards their own charters), they wear cloaks decorated with two-headed eagles, just as they did on the portraits painted during their lifetime (in Mileševa in 1222–1228 and Radoslav's chapel in Studenica in 1234–1235) and those made posthumously (portrait of Prvovenčani in Bogorodica Ljeviška, 1309–1313). The stemmas on their heads, introduced to Serbian regalia only after the middle of the XIII century, are a novelty.[64]

This sort of treatment of existing representations of previous ktetors in the course of their renovation, including alterations of their insignia, attire and inscription and the addition of new personages, seems to have begun with king Dragutin and his restoration of Nemanja's Djurdjevi Stupovi carried aut between 1276 and 1282.[65] During the last years of Milutin's life, at the time the restored katholikon of Chilandar was being decorated with new frescoes, portraits of the first ktetors of this monastery, St. Symeon Nemanja and St. Sava, were painted above the original tomb of Nemanja. They appear as mediators between the new ktetor, king Milutin, and Christ, but in an iconographic form which could certainly not be seen in the older church. Sava is shown as an archbishop, which he had become only after 1219, and it is interesting to note that he is the only one of the two signed as a ktetor.[66] We also believe that figures of St. Symeon Nemanja and St. Sava are shown in Kraljeva crkva (1318–1319) because of their ties with Studenica although there, too, Nemanja is not marked as a ktetor.

Around 1320, in the course of restoration of the cathedral of Hum dedicated to Sts. Peter and Paul, the ktetor's composition on the west wall, including the figure of the first ktetor, prince Miroslav, was repainted. He is wearing a long dark red hiton and a cloak decorated with medallions showing two-headed eagles. Facing St. Peter, prince Miroslav holds up the model of the church with his help while the saint gives him his benediction. This ktetor's composition probably owes its appearance to the original XII century fresco. Proof of this is found in the fact that the only saint receiving the church is apostle Peter, its sole patron until the XIV century. Only in Milutin's charter to the cathedral of Hum (1317–1321) do we find mention of the fact that this church is dedicated to two apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul. However, there is a certain measure of hesitation as to the literal imitation of the original fresco in the XIV century because of the iconographic similarities between this composition and the ktetor's composition from the church of the Virgin in Peć (1330–1337), showing archbishop Danilo II, the acting bishop of Hum at the time of the restoration of the frescoes in the church of St. Peter and Paul, and his holy guardian, prophet Daniel. It is not impossible that, as an adherent of traditional iconography, Danilo insisted that in both churches